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news

significant shorts

Boys who killed mother given release date

A teenager who helped his brother and father murder his mother is likely to be released from custody in just five and a half years, it was revealed yesterday.

John Howells, 16, was convicted of murdering his domineering mother Evelyn at Leeds Crown Court in February. His brother, Glenn, 17, and father David, 48, were also convicted of the murder at their home in Huddersfield, in August 1995.

The boys, who bludgeoned their mother to death with a hammer when they were just 14 and 15, were given indefinite terms in custody by Mr Justice Allot. He sentenced their father to life for the "appalling crime". But John's solicitor, Gordon Perfit, revealed the Lord Chief Justice had recommended to the Home Secretary that John serve seven years and Glenn 10. The father, who the judge said was the instigator of the crime, was not thought to have received his recommendation. All three have already served 18 months in custody, which will be knocked off the final recommendation if it is confirmed by the Home Secretary.

Gulf syndrome delay defended

Britain's Surgeon General at the time of the war with Iraq yesterday defended the Government's long delay in launching a full investigation of Gulf War illness. Sir Peter Beale, now chief medical adviser to the British Red Cross, said it took a long time to find enough sufferers to warrant a major study. He said that during the conflict, sickness rates were unremarkable, and it was only 18 to 24 months later that he became aware of a campaign by lawyers to recognise the syndrome. Despite widespread appeals, only 15 sufferers came forward, too small a number to show any pattern of illness, and it was not until January 1997 that 1,100 had been registered and 920 seen and investigated. The Government has now agreed to full epidemiological studies.

Grieving parents' murder plea



The parents of murdered A-level student Nicola Dixon (pictured) yesterday renewed their appeal for help in tracking down their daughter's killer. A £23,000 reward has been offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for bludgeoning the 17-year-old to death at Trinity Hill, Sutton Coldfield, on New Year's Eve. "Someone must be shielding the murderer," said Rita Dixon, a 46-year-old teacher. "The senseless murder of our precious daughter has devastated us, we can't rest until the killer is arrested and in prison. Nicola deserves justice. Anyone who can help is urged to contact police on 0121-322 6104."

Army appalled by racial allegations

The Army moved last night to limit the fallout from fresh allegations of racial abuse, which came just days after a highly critical report by the Commission for Racial Equality gave the MoD a year to show real commitment to racial equality and tolerance or face legal action. Army sources said they were appalled by the allegations made by 18-year-old Royal Green Jackets Rifleman Clive Walker that his bed and possessions had been the subject of a vicious, racially motivated attack last week. However, they said he had not told officers he had been attacked himself, as reported in some newspapers yesterday, and that they had not heard the allegations that he had been squirted with a fire extinguisher and then scrubbed with a broom "to make him white". An investigation is under way. **Christopher Bellamy**

Sign that speaks in tongues

Future visitors to the Black Country will need an interpreter even before they arrive. For while a road sign written in the much-mocked regional dialect will raise a laugh from locals, it will be gobbledygook to anyone else. "If you're daft enough to come down here on your way home, your tea will be spoilt," reads the sign at the approach to a major road development in Dudley, in the West Midlands. Translated, it means: "If you're daft enough to come down here on your way home, your tea will be spoilt." Dudley council leaders have decided that since there is no alternative route on which to send motorists to enable them to avoid delays, they will humour them instead. The message is, they say, designed to warn locals of an impending construction scheme in a language they will understand. **Clare Garner**

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Home the heroines: (From left) Ann Daniels, Claire Fletcher, Sue Fullove, and Jan McCormac

Warm welcome for women who came in from the cold

A mother of triplets whose expedition to the North Pole almost ended in disaster told yesterday how she survived a five-minute plunge into the freezing Arctic Ocean.

Ann Daniels, 32, part of an all-female relay team trying to reach the Pole, fell through the ice as she skied with the other women. She recalled: "We knew it was thin ice, and when the ice started breaking up I knew I was going to fall in. I couldn't turn round and go back. Gradually I started to go down and down and down. Luckily my head didn't go under. All I could think about was how I was going to get out."

Facing death, she remembered the advice her husband Jez had given her before she set off. "When I left my husband, he said to me, 'If things get bad, stay calm'. I started to pull myself out and on the third attempt I managed to haul myself out."

When I was in the water, my thoughts were too mechanical to fear for my life. Afterwards I only thought about getting warm."

Mrs Daniels, from Bradford, was speaking after arriving at Heathrow having successfully completed her part of the McVitie's Polar Relay, and was looking forward to being reunited with her three-year-old triplets Joseph, Lucy and Rachel.

She said it had been a difficult decision to leave them at home with her husband, but she added that they had been her inspiration. "I have so much to tell them now and so much to teach them, and my journey will be a lesson for them in later life. I wanted to teach my children that you have to live life to the full and grab every opportunity that comes along. I would love them to have the chance to do something like this in the future."

Her husband, a 35-year-old safety officer, said: "Ann

had always wanted to do something like this and I encouraged her to go. But we would not risk doing anything like this together, because that would risk the children's future."

"If you asked the children where their mother was they would have told you she was in the North Pole. They are very excited about her coming home," he said. Returning to Britain yesterday with Mrs Daniels after more than a month away from home, Mrs Fletcher, 31, from County Wexford in Ireland, Mrs Fullove, 31, from County Wexford in Ireland, and Mrs McCormac, 27, from Sunbury, Surrey, and 35-year-old Sue Fullove, from London.

They were the first of five four-strong teams to complete their stretch of the 1,000 kilometre trek to the Pole. The house-sized pressure ridges on what was regarded as the toughest leg, they battled 60 miles in the ice cap in 16 days - twice as far as they had been scheduled to go.

Mrs Fullove also took an unwelcome dip in the Arctic waters just a few days before Mrs Daniels' plunge. "It was a very windy day with poor visibility. I put my foot on a patch that looked as though it was frozen and fell through up to my waist," she said.

Back on solid ice, she said, she rolled herself in the snow in temperatures of about -30C to get rid of the worst of the water.

Despite the dangers of the gruelling trip, all four women said they had enjoyed the experience and hoped to return to the Arctic.

Mrs Daniels said: "It was so exciting, it was just fantastic. You felt on a high the whole time."

The second leg of the McVitie's Polar Relay, a non-tackling the second leg of the expedition, which is due to reach the North Pole in June.

Conran in Power struggle over Zinc trademark

A four-letter word has come between two men deemed synonymous with a good evening out in London.

Sir Terence Conran, the stylish restaurateur, has launched legal action against Vince Power, who owns the Mean Fiddler chain of concert venues including The Forum in Kentish Town and The Grand in Clapham. At issue is Mr Power's new bar, Zn, which was known as the Zincbar when it opened in Kilburn High Road last December. According to a High Court writ issued last week, Sir Terence (pictured) has been the registered owner of the Zinc trademark, when the name is used in relation to restaurants, cafés and wine bars, since June 1995.

The trademark was registered to protect his latest business venture, a chain of French-style cafés to be called the Zinc Bar and Grill. The first is due to open just off Regent Street in August and will provide seating for 120 people.

He is unhappy that the Mean Fiddler's venture conflicts with his own. Although the Zincbar has changed its name to Zn, the chemical symbol for zinc, in an attempt to avert



trouble, the writ still stands pending further legal advice. Joel Kissin, managing director of Conran Restaurants, said: "What does Zn mean? They've said anybody with A-levels or whatever will know what that means - zinc. So they haven't changed it. Supposing you opened a restaurant called Crown, and Terence Conran said he had that registered and you used a picture of a crown. It would still be a representation. What they have done is put a representation of zinc but it's still zinc." **Louise Jury**

Joni Mitchell's mother and child reunion

The singer Joni Mitchell was yesterday celebrating finding the daughter she gave up for adoption 32 years ago. The daughter, who was also engaged in a search for her natural mother, is a model who is said to have inherited the star's looks.

"Apparently her daughter was looking for her, too, so there's sort of a fairy tale ending," Mitchell's father, Bill Anderson, said from his home in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. "We've seen pictures and you can see the similarities."

Mitchell's only child was conceived while she was an art student living in Calgary. Her parents weren't told about the pregnancy until at least two years after the birth.

Neither Mitchell nor the child's father, Brad McMahon, had seen their daughter since she put up for adoption. "We really didn't want to get married and settle down," said Mr McMahon, a Toronto photographer. **David Lister**

briefing

MEDICINE

Perfect skin promised in a scar-free future

Scars from burns and wounds may become a thing of the past within a decade, say scientists who are close to understanding the precise mechanisms that govern the healing of skin.

Even five years from now, doctors could be able to speed up the healing process, and ensure that hair and sweat glands grow back at the site of a wound, according to Paul Martin, at the department of anatomy at University College Hospital, London.

The key lies in an understanding of embryo development, says Dr Martin. In a review of current work on the topic in the journal *Science*, he notes that scientists now understand why injured embryos do not leave scars - unlike in adults, where any wound deep enough to puncture the outer, epidermal layer of skin leaves a permanent mark. The key difference is that in embryos, the damaged cells and their surroundings handle the regeneration, whereas in adults, cells from the immune system called macrophages promote regrowth. However, the macrophages are less controlled than the original cells in controlling regrowth - leading to the excessive but unspecialised tissue that forms a scar. Dr Martin believes that doctors will eventually be able to control the restoration process by using the same chemical "signals" that embryos use on wounds. **Charles Arthur**

MARKETING

S African wine exports boom

South African wine sales are booming in Britain and other European markets which once shunned the products of apartheid. The leading wine cooperative, KWV, said in its annual report released yesterday that export volumes rose by 35 per cent and value rose by about 50 per cent in 1996. KWV, based in Paarl in the Cape wine lands, said exports rose to 11.1 million cases in 1996, earning the country \$50m Rand (£80m) in foreign exchange, compared with exports of \$2.2 million cases in 1995. As recently as 1990, annual exports totalled only \$55,000 cases. KWV said South African wine was now being exported to 60 countries around the world, with the European Union the biggest single consumer.



HEALTH

Britain branded sick man of Europe

Britain is one of the unhealthiest nations in western Europe, according to a new league table.

A high number of deaths from cancer and circulatory put Britain 15th in a list of 27 countries in the world, the publication *Healthcare International* reported. Even the expectancy figures were respectable. Britain still lags countries like Mexico and Taiwan. The rankings took into account including deaths from cancer, infection, and respiratory disease. Bad diet, particularly and the amount processed foods was thought to be blame for Britain's showing. According to the study, Sweden was the healthiest in the world and South Africa and India were the least.

SCIENCE

Breakthrough close on solar

The start of mass production of solar cells made with silicon be the beginnings of truly commercial cost-effective solar according to an American expert.

The efforts of three companies in the US and Japan to "amorphous silicon" solar cells this year for use on houses that the industry is close to breaking through the cost barrier, says Christopher Wronski, a professor of microelectronics and devices at Penn State University. "The next five years could determine the future of this industry," he says. Amorphous silicon solar cells consist of a conducting layer three very thin films of silicon-based material, in which the layer is electrically neutral and the outer two have opposite electrical properties. When the sun's rays hit the layers, it of the light moves electrons between them, generating electricity. However, the efficiency - the ratio of incident energy in the compared to electrical output - is between 10 and 14 per cent industrial products. **Charles**

IMMUNOLOGY

Siblings less prone to allergies

Children with older brothers and sisters are less likely to develop allergies such as asthma, hay fever and eczema, research in Italy indicates. The researchers from the Laboratory for Immunology and Allergy, in Pomezia, Rome, suggest that the reason for their reduced susceptibility could be that, by mixing with their siblings, the children are exposed to common childhood illnesses at an earlier age than average and this confers a degree of protection. A second report, from Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark, shows that children who are born more than a week late and at higher than average birth weight are at increased risk of these disorders. Both reports appear in tomorrow's *British Medical Journal*. **Annabel Ferriman**



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Chariots of ire



Lottery Board blocks cash for film-maker who spoofed David Puttnam's finest hour

David Lister
Arts News Editor

New-found harmony in the British film industry has been punctured by an accusation from an award-winning young film-maker that the establishment tried to block finance for his new movie because it satirises them.

And certainly, *Stiff Upper Lips*, by Gary Sinyor, who won a best newcomer award for the acclaimed *Leon The Pig Farmer*, is a merciless parody of some of the best-known period dramas.

Merchant Ivory films such as *A Room with a View* and *Remains of the Day* receive savage treatment, as does Sir David Puttnam's Oscar-winning *Chariots of Fire*.

The new film opens nationwide in June, but has already opened the Bradford film festival where an exit poll found that 60 per cent of the audience thought it "excellent". Its satire is sometimes heavy-handed, but the film critic of *Time Out*, the Loodoo listings magazine has described it as "a delightfully irreverent and consistently funny parody of British period drama".

It has a star cast including Peter Ustinov, Prunella Scales, Frank Finlay, Sam West and Georgina Cates. But yesterday Mr Sinyor, a past winner of the Edinburgh Film Festival awards, said promised lottery funding of £1m was cancelled when it was realised that film industry luminaries were to be mocked.

The opening scene parodies the *Chariots of Fire* running race in a Cambridge quadrangle. The race is wrecked when a "toff" wanders in front of one of the runners who trips over him. Meanwhile, a Cambridge don is look-



ing out of a window, rhapsodising about the runners' buttocks.

Mr Sinyor said yesterday: "Sir David is a member of the lottery board and would not have been encouraged by the parody. We were sent the film lottery board's assessor's report recommending that the film receive £1m lottery funding. We went out and raised £1.6m private funding on the basis that the lottery deal was on.

We passed all the various committees, but then we got to the old guard. And they stopped it going ahead. They don't like jokes being made at their expense.

"To our amazement we were told we hadn't got the money. I had to go to

Peter Ustinov and the rest of the cast cap in hand. He took a pay cut, the budgets were cut all round, and I had to sell the Spanish and Italian rights. Profits that would have come from those territories back to British investors will now stay in Spain and Italy."

Sir David Puttnam said last night: "It is nonsense to suggest that offence was taken at being parodied. Maybe it makes him more comfortable to think that. But is this the same Gary Sinyor who wrote to me thanking me for starting him in the film industry?"

Mr Sinyor responded yesterday: "Yes, in the early stages of my career I did worship the ground he trod on.



Top: The quadrangle scene from Sir David Puttnam's Oscar-winning film, *Chariots of Fire*. (Photograph: Kobal Collection) The same scene parodied in *Stiff Upper Lips*, with a "toff" wrecking the race by wandering out in front of one of the runners, who then trips over him; and Sir David Puttnam (above)

But once you see your heroes close up, maybe they're no longer so heroic."

The Independent has seen the lottery board assessor's conclusions. Signed by Shelly Bancroft, independent assessor to the Arts Council, it lists the application as for £1m and states: "I recommend this application for an award."

An Arts Council spokeswoman said last night: "David Puttnam wasn't even in the discussion which decided

against the application. The assessor did recommend that it be supported, but expressed very severe reservations about the quality of the film. It is not an assessor we use any more. In financial terms the film didn't fulfill any of our requirements. There was no means by which the Arts Council could have recouped its investment, and the film was going to be made in the Isle of Man which is technically outside the EC."

In fact, the film was shot in London, Italy and India as well as the Isle of Man, and has a certificate saying it is a British film. In addition the assessor's report while admitting the film may not win awards or have the cachet of the films it is sending up, says "it seems to have a great deal of potential for a British audience" and goes on to say that such a provocative film should be supported as "a British film for the British public funded by the British public."

Mr Sinyor, 34, is open in his scepticism about the success of the films promoting a traditional view of Britain. "I frankly think it's maintained by *The English Patient*", he said. "Everything is upper class and tight-lipped."

On 14 and 15 April, Mr Sinyor will be teaching a course in London for aspiring film-makers. He will be instructing them on how to take on the British film establishment. He said yesterday: "If you want to make films in this country, you need to know some basic practicalities. Where to go when the usual suspects say no. How to get private investment. How to make the film you want for less money than you actually have. How you approach an actor behind an agent's back. How to break a few rules and still be honest."

British take top prize in richest race in the world

Greg Wood

Many of Britain's traditional industries have declined in recent years, but its racehorses remain a match for the best in the world.

Singspiel, trained in Newmarket by Michael Stoute, came home first yesterday in the Dubai World Cup, the richest event in racing history with a first prize of £1.4m, to take his career earnings to more than £3.3m, a record for a horse trained in Europe.

The sport's hazards for horse and rider were demonstrated both in Dubai and at Aintree, however, where the opening day of the Grand National meeting left one horse dead, another seriously injured, and three jockeys in hospital for X-rays on suspected broken bones.

In Dubai, the tiny Gulf emirate which stages the World Cup, two horses fell on the turn for home. Bijou D'Inde, trained in Yorkshire and a winner at Royal Ascot last year, was unharmed, but Hokula Vega, a mare who had travelled from Japan for yesterday's race, broke her near-fore fetlock and was humanely destroyed.

Michael Kinane, one of the world's most successful jockeys, was riding Luso in the race. "It was pretty close down the back," he said. "The Japanese was short of room and he tried to angle out. It was a gutsy effort but there was no margin for error and he paid a high price for getting it wrong." Neither riders were seriously hurt.

The first race of the week over the big fir fescues of Aintree's Grand National course also endured its share of misfortune. A miscalculation at the first obstacle left three riders, Carl Llewellyn, Jamie Evans and Robert Thornton, in need of treatment at Liverpool's Fazakerly Hospital. Llewellyn required X-rays on his left hand, Evans injured his left knee but was passed fit to ride Mugoni Beach in tomorrow's National, while Thornton sustained a suspected fracture to his left collarbone.

Their mounts were unharmed, but later in the race,

Coonawarra, ridden by the former champion jockey Richard Dunwoody, broke a leg at the most famous fence on the course, Bechers Brook, and was destroyed.

Earlier, Dunwoody was aboard One Man, one of the most popular chasers in training, when the grey broke a blood vessel in the Murell Cup, but the injury should not cause any long-term damage.

Another runner in Coonawarra's race, The Frog Prince, was pulled up with a suspected fracture high on his near-fore leg. His life hangs in the balance, as the racecourse prepares to stage what is the most famous steeple-

Against all the odds, Sheikh Mohammed persuaded the runners to remain in Dubai

chase in the world, and also one of the most controversial.

Demonstrations by animal rights activists are now an inevitable feature of National day, and played at least a part in the abandonment of the race four years ago after two false starts.

Dry weather and firm ground will not be welcome as runners start to fall tomorrow afternoon. The course at Liverpool might appreciate a little of the rain which caused the postponement of the Dubai World Cup from its original date last Saturday.

Against all the odds, Sheikh Mohammed persuaded the runners and riders to remain in Dubai for a further five days, and his persistence was richly rewarded since he is the owner of Singspiel. The bulk of the £2.5m purse for yesterday's event, put up by the sheikh, will thus remain in his bank account.



The original 1907 Grand National trophy, the Emerson Cup was up for auction last night. Photograph: Craig Easton

Child epilepsy drug much more risky than previously thought

Annabel Ferriman

An epilepsy drug which can cause side-effects, including a skin reaction similar to third degree burns - and in rare cases may be fatal - presents a greater risk to children than was first thought, doctors were warned yesterday.

Scientists at the drug giant Glaxo Wellcome have discovered that side effects of Lamictal occur in between one in 100 and one in 300 cases, rather than the one in 1,000 occurrence that they previously thought.

The company has issued a warning to every doctor in the country to be on the alert for reactions. Almost 30,000 prescriptions were written out for children in the UK last year, and 207,000 for adults, though the

number of people taking the drug will be substantially fewer (because many have several prescriptions a year). They are being told to see their doctor if they notice a rash.

A spokesman for Glaxo said yesterday that the drug had been taken by more than 800,000 people world-wide, and had resulted in less than five deaths, none of which were in the UK. He said: "It is difficult to be sure if the deaths were linked to the drug because people taking it will be taking a cocktail of drugs and will have risks associated with their illness as well. Untreated epilepsy can be fatal."

"We are not changing our opinion of the safety profile of this drug, but we are saying that the incidence of skin reaction is

higher in children... if a patient develops any sign of a rash, they should see their doctor and let him evaluate if it is drug-related. It is important that patients do not stop taking the treatment without first consulting their doctor."

Lamictal, whose generic name is lamotrigine, was first licensed in Britain in 1991 and is especially useful as an add-on drug for patients with hard-to-control seizures. In fact, the company only has a licence for it as an add-on medication in children under 12. The drug has recognised side-effects which, in rare cases, can include two extremely serious skin rash reactions. One, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, produces fever and blistering. The other, more serious, condition, called toxic epi-

dermal necrolysis, can produce skin peeling on the same scale as that caused by third-degree burns. Patrick Vallance, professor of clinical pharmacology at University College London, said yesterday: "This drug represents a significant advance in the management of epilepsy and has been useful. Epilepsy has been a neglected area and the development of new drugs has

made doctors take notice and treat it more seriously. He added: "But the problem of lamotrigine in children highlights the general problem we have about prescribing drugs... there are not very good systems for testing drugs in children, because of the understandable reluctance of doctors to conduct clinical trials in children."

Glaxo shares hit, page 24

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news

Eurotunnel admits to delays in fire rescue

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Eurotunnel, the operator of train services through the Channel Tunnel, will spend more than £20m installing firefighting equipment and updating safety procedures after admitting yesterday that there were "avoidable delays" in evacuating passengers from a blazing train in November.

The company said it was acting on the findings of an internal inquiry into the fire. Thirty-four people were rescued by firemen from the blaze, which destroyed 125 lorry wagons and melted tracks and signalling.

"We have, of course, learned lessons from this incident," said Patrick Ponsolle, Eurotunnel's French co-chairman. "We have already implemented a number of important changes in procedures, equipment, training levels and training to improve further the protection of passengers, employees and the tunnel itself."

The cause of the fire, which cost the company £200m in repairs and loss of revenue, is still being investigated by a French magistrate. Eurotunnel yesterday ruled out mechanical failure as a cause. "There are two possibilities. The first is that the fire was caused by a failure of the lorries' equipment. The second was that it was caused by a criminal act," said Mr Ponsolle.

Executives said they planned to reopen shuttle services by June and would put in place the new safety measures by May. The report recommends passengers are issued with smoke hoods and that the 50km tunnel is lined with water sprinklers.

Also highlighted by the inquiry were a number of failures in emergency procedures. The company said it would spend more than £1m a year to improve staff training. Eurotunnel also admitted the safety of passengers "would be improved if

the train was evacuated immediately following a controlled stop". Before yesterday's report, the company had insisted a burning train should race non-stop through the tunnel.

The report also recommended that lorries boarding Eurotunnel's trains should be subject to rigorous inspections. French investigators have centred their inquiries on a lorry wagon carrying Cornflakes.

In an apparent snub to the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, which has to certify the new procedures, Eurotunnel will not replace its controversial open-sided carriages. Critics claim the design of the wagons would fan the flames of a burning train as it roared through the tunnel. "We do not consider the designs to be unsafe," said Robert Malpas, Eurotunnel's British chairman. Eurotunnel, which has a further 72 wagons of similar design on order, has long argued that the increased weight of a covered wagon and a 44-ton lorry would be too heavy for its tracks.

Executives dismissed claims that Eurotunnel had previously put profits before safety. "We spent £1bn alone on the emergency-service tunnel which saved all those lorry drivers' lives. We are committed to a safe system," said Mr Malpas.

The company is confident its findings will be approved by the Inter-Governmental Commission, staffed by transport civil servants from France, Belgium and Britain, but accepted it might make "minor modifications". "It is unlikely that any decision will be made before the general election," said a company spokesman.

Eurotunnel also accepted that some drivers had refused to use the service until safety had been reviewed. "I am not surprised," said Mr Malpas. "But you only have to see that our tourist traffic leapt 21 per cent last month to know that customers are coming back."

Motorway gridlock: New terrorist tactic brings three of Britain's busiest roads to a halt



The M5/M6 junction in the West Midlands after being cleared by police

Photograph: David Jones/PA

IRA catches 250,000 victims with a few calls

Ian Burrell

It only took a few phone calls and the IRA had claimed more than 250,000 new victims yesterday. Although no bomb was planted and no one was injured, the call led to the closure of three British motorways.

The chaos began at 8am with messages to two hotels at Walsall, close to junction 9 of the M6. A similar call was made in Warwickshire. The messages contained an IRA password and warning which prompted an operation involving bomb-disposal experts and four police forces. Thousands of motorists were diverted as the M1 was closed between junctions 17 and 19 in Northamptonshire and at junction 20 in Leicestershire. In the West Midlands, police closed the M6 between junctions seven and 10, and the M5 was also shut from junction one to its intersection with junction eight of the M6. Dogs, firearms officers and explosive experts began scouring the carriageway as a "skyshot" helicopter warned motorists away from the area. Bomb experts carried out controlled explosions on containers placed among roadworks on the A428, which runs beneath the M1. Police evacuated 500 people from their homes in Walsall.



Police redirecting diverted motorists at junction seven of the M6

As a terrorist operation, it had so simply and effectively caused disruption and economic damage that it begged the question: why had the IRA not used the tactic before? In a research paper in July, Paul Rogers, head of Peace Studies at Bradford University, said the IRA's renewed mainland campaign would concentrate on key economic targets, notably transport links. Yesterday security experts said the episode, following on from the recent targeting of the rail network, signalled a deeply worrying change in tactics by the terrorists.

End to ceasefire hope

David McKibbin
Ireland correspondent

Both the motorway disruption and the statements of republican spokesmen in Belfast appear to indicate that the recent predictions of an imminent IRA ceasefire are unfounded.

There has been much media conjecture that the IRA might call a halt to its campaign of violence in order to help maximise the Sinn Féin vote in the election, given that the party claims to have a chance of winning three seats.

It has been speculated that republicans believe a limited ceasefire would increase pressure on the new British government to do business with them, in the hope of building that into another complete IRA cessation.

The official position, as spelt out by Sinn Féin chairman Mitchell McLaughlin yesterday, is as follows: "The political conditions have not been created to justify all this media speculation be-

ing pumped out. Because that's all it is, speculation. Obviously the IRA will make their own decision, but I would be very, very surprised if there was any unilateral initiative in the current circumstances."

Such Sinn Féin pronouncements have in the past proved accurate guidelines as to future IRA actions. One republican source said yesterday: "You can rest assured there'll be no leap in the dark. There was a leap in the dark in August '94, and it didn't work. There's not going to be another one."

At the moment, the IRA is waging a comparatively low-key campaign. It has been noted that its last two attacks in Britain, at Wilmslow railway station and yesterday on the motorway system, have been designed to cause disruption rather than to take life. The IRA is such a calculatedly unpredictable organisation, however, that it is impossible to say whether such an approach will continue.

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Claws are out for the Beast of Bont

Tony Heath

A mysterious predator is stalking a sparsely populated mid-Wales countryside and spreading alarm among farming communities.

The beast kills stock swiftly and savagely, making off speedily once it has completed its work. Sheep carcasses bear testimony to the predator, variously described as a puma or leopard.

It is known throughout the rural county of Ceredigion as the Beast of Bont; the name is derived from the name of the village, Pont-y-bont-digaid, which is at the centre of the animal's hunting area.

Its attacks come at the height of the lambing season. Farmers like Ednyfed Jones work round the clock, keeping a watch over their flocks with more than usual concern, often with a shotgun not far away.

"I've lost six sheep - clawed by a big cat-like animal. One was half-dead. We had to put it down. Its ribs were smashed and there was a huge hole in its back. No fox could do that," Mr Jones, 33, who farms near by, said yesterday.

Alex Truss, the teenage son of the village postmistress spotted the Beast at twilight on the outskirts of the settlement.

"It took off at a tremendous rate, the back legs coming in front of the front legs," he said. That bounding action is familiar to television viewers of African wildlife programmes.

Shepherd Aza Pinney cannot recall anything similar since he began patrolling the remote mountains more than a decade ago.

At first some dismissed the affair as a hoax perpetrated after an evening's drinking. The doubters were silenced as the number of sightings grew. And



Call of the wild: A rare sighting of the the Beast of Bodmin, which, like its Welsh counterpart, is spreading panic in the farming community

then Ministry of Agriculture vets at Aberystwyth, the "capital" of one of Britain's most sparsely populated areas, examined a sheep carcass and declared that the killer was a deal more powerful than a fox or

rogue dog. Normally the Beast devours its prey, leaving only bones and scraps of wool as evidence.

It is proving difficult to track down the Beast. More than 100 square miles of hilly terrain are

intersected by large tracks of forest offering numerous hiding places to the creature, reported to stand 2ft tall.

After several sightings, Dyfed-Powys police officers swept the area without suc-

cess. Chief Inspector Brian Wiley, who is based at Aberystwyth, said: "There have been sufficient sightings to suggest that the culprit is something other than the usual attackers of farm stock." He suggested

that the possibility of more than one animal being at large, and possibly mating, could not be ruled out.

Last night, amid calls to set up a hunt for the Beast, farmers met police to consider the

next move. Meanwhile, Gwilym Thomas, of the Farmers Union of Wales, warned: "Until the Beast is brought to book every farmer must take all precautions to protect their live stock."

Family TV 'can corrupt children'

Simon Reeve

Television shows such as *Gladiators* and *Blind Date* are making violence, sex and cruelty more enjoyable for the public and fuelling a growing addiction to real-life violence, according to a criminologist.

Mike Presdee, a reader in criminology at the University of Sunderland, is warning that some "family" shows could be more of a corrupting influence than films such as *Pulp Fiction*. He believes that as a result of the programmes, people view intimidation and cruelty as everyday events.

"*Gladiators* is just real-life violence," said Mr Presdee. "There are two shapely young women dressed in sexually attractive costumes stood on plinths beating the hell out of each other, and mothers, fathers, children and grandparents cheer them on."

Mr Presdee said ITV's *Blind Date* is "cruelty television". "People watch it to see two people humiliating each other and tearing each other apart emotionally. It is often nasty and shocking and sexually gratuitous and people love watching others being torn apart." Mr Presdee and Gavin Carver of the University of Kent will deliver a paper on this theme to the British Sociological Society's annual conference at York University next week and are calling for a wider debate about television and video violence.

Other experts are less convinced of the dangers of family television shows, but remain concerned about the wider effects of "trivialising" violence. "I find some scenes in shows such as *EastEnders* far more disturbing and violent than you get in many films which are supposed to be outright violence," said Roger Matthews, a reader in criminology at Middlesex University.

LWT, which makes *Blind Date* and *Gladiators*, defended the shows. "*Gladiators* is a hugely popular show watched by over 10 million viewers at tea-time," said a spokesman. "Tony Blair recently said that *Gladiators* was the programme he was most likely to sit down and watch with his children."

Escaped pets, abandoned fashion statements or phantasmagorical phenomena - strange cats have been seen in Britain for centuries



A plaster cast of what is said to be the beast's paw-print

Big cats have been "sighted" in Great Britain for the past 30 years, writes Mark Rowe. Reports have come from 30 English counties. Northern Ireland, Highland areas of Scotland, Wales, Grampian, Kent, North Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Sussex have proved particularly fertile territory for reports of panthers, pumas and black leopards.

There have also been sightings in urban areas including Dundee, Falmouth, Gloucester and Southampton.

Big cat watchers claim that up to 50 may be roaming the countryside and the issue has polarised opinions among zo-

ologists. Some of the more famous sightings of the feline felines include: ■ The "Surrey Puma", which has been spotted at least 700 times during the past 30 years.

■ The infamous "Beast of Bodmin Moor". There have been more than 100 sightings on the Cornish granite hills of a creature, variously described as a panther, puma or lynx since 1963. Consistent reports by farmers that they lost ewes and calves eventually prompted a government inquiry. In 1995 the Ministry of Agriculture said that its three-month inquiry had found "no verifiable evidence

of such a creature but reported that the investigation could not prove that a big cat is not present."

■ In September 1996, a former Gwent zoo consultant was among those who reported a black beast around Blackgrove, near Balmoral. No creature was ever found.

■ A large paw print found by a farmer near Liskeard, Cornwall, in 1995 was later identified as coming from a large dog.

■ In July 1995, a motorist reported seeing a cat with "faint as thick as a man's arm" and with green eyes and a matted coat near Holesdale in Northumbria.

■ In 1994, a leopard was killed by a car at Hayling Island, Hampshire and a Devon farmer shot dead a South American leopard.

■ A puma was caught near Inverness in 1995. Another was captured in 1990 near Abernethy.

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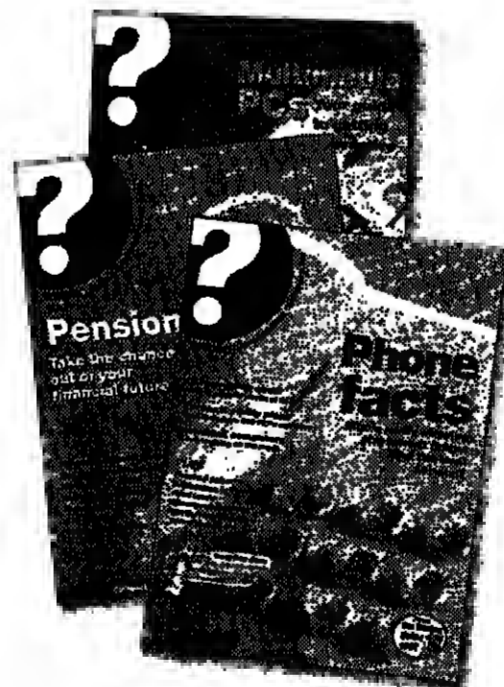
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Victory in historic fight to show equal worth of women

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The Government has made key concessions in a landmark equal pay challenge by National Health Service speech therapists that could pave the way for up to £100m in back pay and new salary scales for women health service workers.

After more than a decade of resistance, the Department of Health has accepted that Professor Pamela Enderby, former departmental head of speech and language therapy at Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, who pioneered the first claim, and Lesley Gogher, a speech and language therapy section leader with Sheffield Community Health, deserved equal pay with colleagues in the predominantly male professions of clinical psychology and pharmacy.

The two cases were among 19 "lead" claims finally nearing a conclusion at an industrial tribunal in Croydon, 11 years after Professor Enderby became the first of hundreds of speech therapists to lodge a claim under the 1984 "equal pay for work of equal value" regulations, in March 1986. Another 1,500 cases from the 7,000-strong, largely female, speech therapists' profession are waiting in the wings.

Professor Enderby, now professor of rehabilitation at the Northern General Hospital, Sheffield, was yesterday barely able to believe that her 11-year fight had finally ended. "When I started the case I felt that being realistic it would take two years," she said.

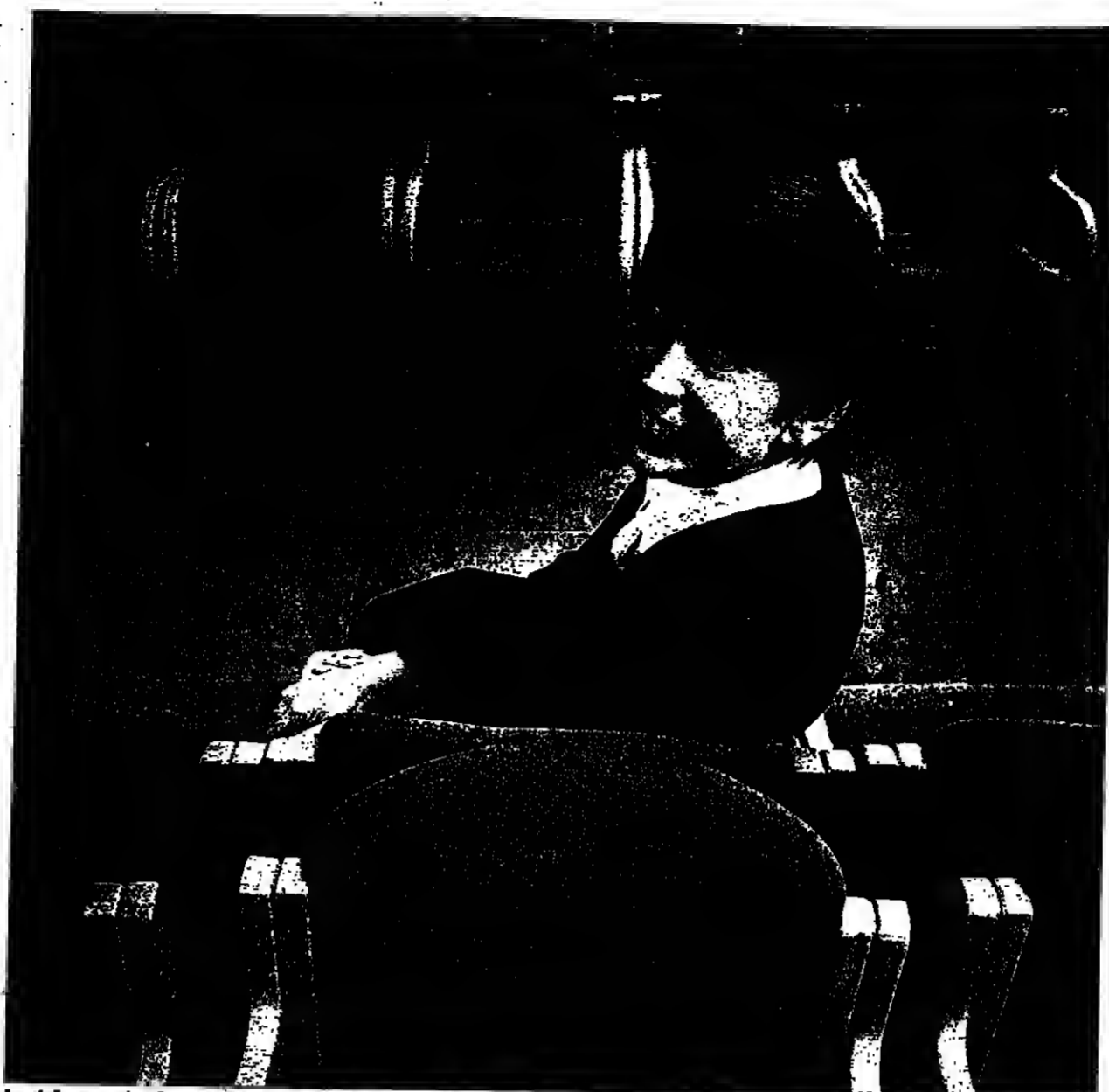
The DoH could have taken the decision years ago to undertake job evaluations to ensure female staff doing work of equal value to that of male colleagues were being paid equally. Instead, it instructed individual NHS trusts not to settle cases and chose to spend millions of pounds of taxpayers' money defending the lead claims in a succession of legal hearings. Without the backing of the therapists' union, and the Equal Opportunities Commission, the battle for equal treatment would have been abandoned.

The speech therapists' claim has been through industrial tribunals, the High Court, the Court of Appeal (twice) and the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg before finally returning to the Croydon tribunal this week, making it the second-longest group action for equal pay for work of equal value. The first, by women canteen workers against British Coal, was launched in 1985.

The disparity between Professor Enderby's salary and her clinical psychologist and pharmacist comparators was £4,000 and £7,000 respectively, but the outcome of hers and the other cases could have ramifications for other "female" professions in the health service, such as midwives, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Only 500 of the 1,500 pending speech therapist cases are eventually won, the bill against the NHS for back pay alone would be worth up to £30m.

The women's solicitor, Sara Leslie, of the Sheffield law firm Irwin Mitchell, said: "Most people assume that women carrying out work of equal value to men will be paid equally. These cases prove this is not so."



Lost for words: Speech therapist Pamela Enderby at the industrial tribunal

Photograph: Andrew Buuman

Our patients have no voice, so our profession is devalued

Speech therapists who work in the areas of autism and dyspraxia must complete a three-year degree course and many may also have to take a masters degree in linguistics and have supervisory, managerial and teaching responsibilities, writes Patricia Wynn Davies

At the Frenchay Hospital, Pamela Enderby worked in clinical assessment, diagnosis and treatment and supervised other therapists. While she became aware that a pharmacist who did not supervise a department was earning considerably more than her, she was as concerned for the effect of low pay on her profession when she began her war of attrition against the NHS.

"I want our profession to do well," she said yesterday. "Our patients are devalued; they have no voice, so that means our profession is devalued."

Aged 48, with the kind of reassuring presence that would inspire confidence in any patient, she left Frenchay last April to take up the post of professor of rehabilitation at Sheffield University, based at the Northern General Hospital. "I have effectively left my profession because I am a career-minded person and wanted to develop."

It takes about 10 to 12 years for a speech therapist to reach the top of her profession and the top of the salary scale. Most receive between £15,000 and £19,000 and that maximum is several thousands pounds less than the pay of a London Underground train driver.

The Health Service is constantly hemorrhaging these highly trained therapists, Professor Enderby said. Some turn to management jobs, not only in the NHS but with commercial firms who pay well, such as Marks & Spencer.

Never did she expect her case to take 11 years. But the struggle was worthwhile. "There are going to be a few more years of decisions before we feel we have really won. I want to see the effects on the profession. I was not so much motivated by pay but by how we keep people in this very valuable job."

Her solicitor, Sara Leslie, of the Sheffield firm Irwin Mitchell, said the tortuous procedure for proving equal pay for work of equal value claims was a scandal. A complaint is pending before the European Commission that the procedure is so time-consuming and expensive as to effectively deny women their legal rights.

Scientists' delight at solar probe decision

Scientists reacted with delight yesterday after hearing that the European Space Agency is to relaunch the Cluster mission of spacecraft to study the Sun, writes Charles Arthur.

The original launch ended in spectacular failure last June when the Ariane-5 rocket carrying the scientific instruments blew up less than a minute after takeoff.

"This is great news," said Professor Alan Johnston of the Mullard Space Science Laboratory, who lost years of work in the explosion. "It has been a

long campaign with a lot of ups and downs, but I'm happy this will happen, in the circumstances."

Apart from an abstention by Italy, the member countries of ESA agreed yesterday to buy two Russian Soyuz rockets for the launch, and to rebuild all four scientific instruments that were originally lost in the explosion. Previously, the ESA had been considering a cheaper option which would involve fewer instruments. That, however, would have provided less scientific data.

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Respectable face of road rage is revealed

Reports by Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Priests, doctors and policemen do not fit the archetypal picture of a violent thug. But according to psychologists the modern phenomenon of road rage has created a new type of attacker - older, better-off and more respectable - than the typical violent criminal.

Over the past three years, more and more road-rage inci-

dents have been reported and worsening traffic conditions and increased day-to-day stress have been held responsible.

Worryingly, increased awareness of the phenomenon appears to be legitimising this form of anti-social behaviour, said John Groeger, Professor of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Surrey.

The professor, whose talk at the Edinburgh Science Festival was sponsored by the British Psychological Society, said that

he was initially sceptical that road rage existed. But after examining newspaper reports of 100 incidents since 1993 was convinced it was a new type of attack.

While social violence is usually carried out by young males aged 18-23, road-rage perpetrators showed a very different profile. The vast majority were in their mid-thirties and were from widely diverging social classes. "This is most unusual," said Professor Groeger. "We are

talking about a much older group of people (than are usually involved in violence)." He said that there were "a very big spread" in the types of people involved. Company directors and policemen had attacked others, and there were two cases of doctors pulling guns on their victims. In one incident, an elder of a Jewish church had attacked a Buddhist monk at a set of traffic lights, and a vicar's wife had also attacked another woman in another case.

Men tended to attack other men, and women other women. "The notion that there is a sex difference that males are violent toward women drivers is wrong," said the professor.

In other forms of violence, 80 per cent of perpetrators knew their victims, whereas people rarely knew those they attacked in a road-rage situation. "It all suggests we are talking about something different," said the professor.

Previous research he had

carried out on 100 drivers suggested that over-confident drivers - those who thought their ability behind the wheel was better than average - could be more at risk of reacting violently.

In the study, drivers went out for 22 miles with an instructor who commented on their driving. Those who had been over-confident to start off with became anxious, hostile, more sensitive to criticism and more critical of other road users' abilities. "The over-confident be-

came over-critical, and also tended to overreact because of their anxiety," said Professor Groeger.

Society has become increasingly aware of road rage - this week it was revealed that Derek Wilton's character in *Coronation Street* will die of a heart attack after a road-rage argument. But more media coverage of the problem added to the "danger it was becoming a legitimate form of anti-social behaviour", warned the professor.

More road congestion was adding to the problem and, coupled with extra stress if someone then cuts up a driver, violence can result. "The confluence of increased traffic density and increased stress in many other areas of our life can combine to produce that."

Professor Groeger said that more research needed to be done into road-rage attackers so that therapy could be more successfully targeted. In other situations, anger management

Idolising rock stars can damage your health

Obsession with Take That or the Spice Girls may be innocent enough when you're 14 years old. Carry the fixation into your twenties however and your teen idol can become bad for your health.

Revering famous stars such as Gary Barlow, supermodel Naomi Campbell or footballer Alan Shearer into adulthood increases your chance of psychological problems, eating disorders and problems forming relationships.

"It can be a way of avoiding rather than dealing with problems," said Dr Tony Cassidy, a psychologist at Nene College, Northampton.

He looked at 163 adults in a pilot study. During adolescence three-quarters of men and women in the group - now aged between 20 and 28 - said they had hero-worshipped someone.

Most people throw off their fixation by their twenties but Dr Cassidy told the annual conference of the British Psychological Society in Edinburgh that half of those who had idols could not let their feelings go.

Those who remained loyal fans tended to be more preoccupied with their weight - this



Girl power: Stella Williams, aged 14, of north London with Spice Girls poster. Innocent enthusiasm can turn sour

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

was particularly true for women. They also disliked their appearance more.

"Another aspect of teen idols is that they serve as models" said Dr Cassidy. "Many young girls develop distorted body images of themselves and ulti-

mately eating disorders as a result of the media portrayal of supermodels with ideal bodies."

The obsessive tended to be less satisfied with their relationships and were more likely to have short-term affairs. The most extreme fantasised

about having a relationship with their adored one or becoming jealous of their idol's partners.

"It is clear that for many this phase becomes extreme as was recently demonstrated by a number of attempted suicides

among fans of the pop group Take That after the group split up" added Dr Cassidy.

But parents should not rush to the bedroom to rip down their children's posters.

There was one bright spot for fans who did have a teen idol

but who gave it up when they reached adulthood - they were subsequently better at problem-solving. "Having an idol" showed a use of imagination which is generally recognised as part of the developmental process," said Dr Cassidy.

Tall, solvent and caring. Babes only need apply

It is no longer enough to be an attractive professional with a GSOH. Males who place lonely hearts ads are now coming across as new men in order to attract a mate.

A study of more than 2,000 personal advertisements from local and national newspapers found that the qualities of being loving and giving - as well as having wads of cash - were seen as the best way to win a woman's heart.

Mark Mason of Nene College, Northampton, told the British Psychological Society annual conference in Edinburgh that personal ads were becoming increasingly common as our lives become "more busy, more fragmented and more traditional ways of meeting people [become] less common."

While heterosexual men still mentioned that their charm lay in their bank balance, Mr Mason said they were increasingly including caring qualities in their lonely hearts ads.

"There are two possible explanations," he said. "It could be that men are changing into new men and are less shy of advertising their expressive qualities. Or it could be simply an attempt to gain more replies. In my opinion, I would not be surprised [if this was the case]."

Women emphasised their good looks rather than financial status as well as "traditional feminine qualities" of caring and understanding. But Mr Mason warned that placing undue emphasis on physical charms "may be seen as superficial and might



not generate replies from men seeking home-building qualities." Both sexes used the word "genuine" most frequently. Gay men, in comparison, tended to emphasise their independence and their physical attributes.

Lesbians wanted caring partners, placing less stress on physical attractiveness. But despite the new sensitivity, some stereotypes were found very pervasive. Women still wanted older rich men. And men still look for younger women and "a lot of men did ask for blondes". No man asked for a financially independent woman.

On Mr Mason's terms, ideal advertisements might read: "Caring, handsome millionaire, 35, would like to meet genuine younger woman interested in home building." Or "Beautiful shapely twenty-something babe, seeks old rich man to prove blondes have more fun."

Suzanne Moore, page 23

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Informers to get own national pay scale

Ian Burrell

The police have drawn up a national pay scale for rewarding underworld informants to try to stop abuse of the system, which has allowed criminals to earn money for false or worthless information.

Payment will be based on a points system linked to the quality of information, the risk taken by the informant, and the result of the tip-off. More than 150 officers gathered at a conference yesterday to try to improve procedures for dealing with the growing army of informants. With intelligence-led policing now accepted as an effective strategy in tackling crime, chiefs are anxious to achieve uniformity in policy.

The conference, organised by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), heard that the points system had been piloted in Kent and found to work. The conference also heard that almost all police forces in England and Wales now use teenagers to pass them information about juvenile crime.

Roy Penrose, the ACPO spokesman on informants and national co-ordinator of regional crime squads, said there were many potential pitfalls in

dealing with young informants and that officers must remember that the "welfare of the child is paramount".

The Kent, Durham and Merseyside forces have drawn up guidelines for the use of informants, including juveniles, which ACPO urged other forces to take on board. Both the Home Office and the Audit Commission have urged forces to make greater use of informants as a cost-effective and efficient way of tackling crime.

Yet research commissioned by ACPO two years ago found the system had become open to abuse. The inquiry found officers lying in court to protect their criminal contacts, secretly using public money to pay them and blocking attempts to prosecute their sources. In one example, an informant stole £2,500 from a bank and then fell out with his accomplice and reported to his police handler. The officer arrested the accomplice, seizing half the stolen money. He allowed the informant to go free, keep his share and even claim a reward.

Now police forces could set up specialist "snout squads" made up exclusively of officers with particular skill in working effectively with informants.



Turning back the clock: Wildlife should return to the River Dearne after a £400,000 restoration programme to bring back the bends

Photograph: Time Smith/Guzelian

Kinks are put back into the river that went straight

Esther Leach

The bends are being put back into a once heavily polluted river as part of an attempt to restore it to its natural healthy state.

New curves in the Dearne, in South Yorkshire, will create riffles and pools and different

flows to encourage new species of fish, and hush plantlife.

It is an attempt to repair damage caused during the Industrial Revolution, when part of the river was engineered into a straight, narrow canal, and the environmental consequences were ignored.

Although the quality of the water has gradually improved, the return of wildlife has been hampered because the Dearne was too straight.

Today, earthmovers are being used to bring back bends and allow the river to meander gently through the Dearne Valley,

in a £400,000 restoration programme led by the Environment Agency.

Its chief executive, Ed Gallagher, said: "The historical methods of forcing the river into long, straight channels to remove water quickly during times of flooding cost the

Dearne dearly in lost wildlife.

"The agency's work to replace the bends in the River Dearne recreates its natural state."

The first phase of the three-stage river redevelopment has already been completed, with the second to be finished this

month, and the third by June.

Chris Firth, the area fisheries officer, said he hoped to see more varieties of fish thriving, including roach, dace, chub, tench, pike and bream. "The new gravel banks are invaluable to wildlife because they allow fish to lay their eggs."

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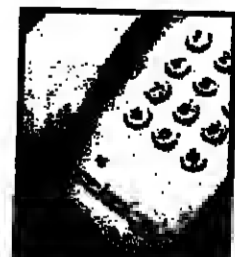
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DAILY POEM

The Flower

By Alexander Pushkin, translated by A D P Briggs

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And by a curious idea
My wondering spirit has been struck.

Where, when, in what spring did it grow?
How old was it? Who picked it, who?
Some stranger, or someone I know?
And what was it supposed to do?

To mark a meeting of twin souls,
Or some dire parting of the ways?
Or just a solitary stroll
Through quiet fields or woodland shade?

And is he still alive? Is she?
Where are they now, where is their nook?
Or have they faded finally
Like this lost flower in the book?

Pushkin's lyric, written in 1828, ends our choices from the new titles in the Everyman's Poetry series. A D P Briggs's selection of Pushkin's verse (Everyman/J M Dent, £2) includes many shorter works, the concluding stanzas of *Evgeny Onegin*, and the whole of *The Bronze Horseman* and *The Captive in the Caucasus*.



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THE INDEPENDENT election '97

Tories fear big changes by Labour

John Rentoul

Most voters believe a Labour government would make a difference to the way the country is run, according to today's *Independent/Harris* poll.

The poll, in which Labour's lead is unchanged at 24 points, also points to a small majority in favour of changing to a proportional voting system in the referendum on the issue which Labour has promised, although many voters have yet to make up their minds.

In a finding which contradicts

the assumption of widespread voter apathy, nearly three-quarters of those polled (73 per cent) said they thought a Labour win in the election would mean "big changes", or "some changes", for the country. Only 18 per cent predicted "hardly any changes", or "no changes at all".

It seems most voters are going into the campaign proper with modest expectations of the difference Tony Blair would make as prime minister.

Mr Blair said yesterday that his manifesto "does not promise the earth" - which seems to be

accepted by people intending to vote Labour. Of them, only 24 per cent expect "big changes", while 56 per cent see "some changes".

It is Conservative supporters who are most likely to forecast "big changes" under Labour - feared by 34 per cent of them. Liberal Democrats are most likely to be cynical - 26 per cent of them expect "hardly any", or "no" changes.

But the overwhelming majority of the electorate rejects the idea that there is no difference between the parties.

THE INDEPENDENT HARRIS POLL

In a separate finding, however, most voters take a jaundiced view of Mr Blair's ability to maintain a united front over Europe if he forms the government, with 46 per cent (and 45 per cent of Labour supporters) expecting it to be as divided as the Tories.

The *Independent/Harris* poll

suggests that there is all to play for in the referendum on electoral reform promised by Mr Blair - who is "not persuaded" of the case for change. He could come under pressure from Labour supporters, who support a proportional voting system by a margin of 44 to 31 per cent, with 22 per cent undecided.

Predictably, Liberal Democrats are most keen on change (backed by 60 per cent), while Tories are most opposed (56 per cent back the present system).

But our poll will steady Labour nerves, showing the party's lead unchanged since last week, on 52 per cent to the Tories' 28 per cent, with the Liberal Democrats on 14 per cent.

Today's Gallup poll in the *Telegraph* shows the gap closing by 4.5 points over two weeks, with Labour on 52 per cent, the Tories on 31 per cent and Liberal Democrats on 11 per cent.

Two other polls this week produced contrary findings - ICM showing the gap widening, while MORI showed it narrowing. So, while polling companies may disagree about the levels of support for each party, there is no clear evidence yet of a shift in public opinion.

The clear winner in our poll today is Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party, which registered 3.2 per cent support - its highest in our polls.

This will alarm Conservative Central Office because its support continues to come over-

whelmingly from among those who say they voted Tory in 1992.

It is possible that *The Independent/Harris* poll overstates the Labour Party's lead by a few points, as it puts the Tories four points behind when people are asked how they voted at the last general election. Other evidence suggests the parties should be level pegging on this measure.

■ Harris Research interviewed 1,091 adults face-to-face in their homes between 27 and 31 March.



Pipe dream: Major being greeted at Gretna Green

Photograph: Peter Macdaniell

Party leaders take war over devolution north of the border

Colin Brown and Steve Boggan

John Major and Tony Blair went head to head over Scottish devolution yesterday as they took their campaigns north of the border.

Mr Major brushed aside the turmoil in the Scottish Tory party and predicted the Conservatives would increase their seats in Scotland by campaigning against Labour plans for a Scottish parliament.

The Prime Minister went to the Scottish borders hamlet of Gretna Green, where runaways traditionally got married, to unfurl a Union flag, marking the start of his Scottish campaign.

Warning that Labour would increase taxes north of the border and threaten the Union, Mr Major said: "I'm here to symbolise a marriage which has lasted 290 years and I hope would be good for another 290 years. It is a marriage that has served both partners well."

He told party workers at the Old Smithy Restaurant: "We will take more Conservative

Members of Parliament from Scotland than we have at the moment."

The Tories are defending 10 seats in Scotland and their position was undermined when internal fending led to Sir Michael Hirst being forced to resign as the party chairman at the weekend amid speculation, which proved false, that there would be disclosures about his private life.

Sir Michael was not at Gretna Green to greet the Prime Minister yesterday, although they are close friends. Mr Major was met by Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, and by Annabel Goldie, who replaced Sir Michael.

The Prime Minister's arrival caught a newly-married couple on the hop. Michael and Majella Rigney had been married two hours earlier by the registrar at Gretna Green when the Mr Major and his entourage arrived.

Mr Rigney said: "We have come over from Derry and were hoping we were going to have a quiet wedding. We were hoping it was going to be in

private." He joked: "Wait till my wife finds out."

They were introduced to Mr Major and his wife, Norma, after waiting a further two hours while the Majors toured the Old Smithy. Mr Major said: "There is more at stake than one general election, it is the future of Scotland."

Struan Stevenson, the Tory candidate for Dumfries, said: "People on the doorstep are sick of death of sleaze. They are sick of politicians arguing with each other. Everybody is saying they want us to get down to the real issues."

Mr Major said the Tories had published a full manifesto on Scotland. "Mr Blair has written a Scottish manifesto and comes up from London with it in his back pocket and tells George Robertson [Labour spokesman on Scotland] what he stands for."

Mr Major's battle bus drove back into England for the Prime Minister's first appearance on a new, hi-tech soapbox. The platform, a 3ft-high metal box with steps, was extracted from

the side of the bus for Mr Major to deliver a speech in the market square in Carlisle after a walk-about.

Appearing to enjoy the heckling, Mr Major told the crowd when he had been accused of being "chicken", that Labour had planned to launch their manifesto in the City in the street known as the Poultry.

Some of his jokes were booed but he was loudly applauded when he said Mr Blair had refused to allow his children to be educated in the Labour Borough of Islington.

He had difficulty over unemployment but told the crowd: "I happen to be a working man and I am going to keep myself in my job on I May."

Tony Blair took the fight for Scotland into the Striving constituency of Mr Forsyth. But the Labour leader went on a walk-about in the town to drum up support for the party's candidate, Anne McGuire, who needs a swing of only 0.3 per cent, just 237 votes, to topple Mr Forsyth. Almost inevitably, Mr Blair was greeted not only by

hundreds of cheering supporters, but by the Conservative Party's new mascot - a large yellow chicken holding a placard bearing the words "Answer the West Lothian question" - referring to Tory concerns over Scottish devolution.

Alastair Orr, the Conservative constituency party chairman, rejected charges that the chicken was lowering the debate to the level of "puerile student union politics".

He replied: "We are saying Labour are chicken and are running scared. When they will answer some questions, then we will get serious."

Ms McGuire said: "This is just a pathetic stunt by a pathetic group of people. We're committed to the establishment of a Scottish parliament. The so-called West Lothian question will be dealt with during the establishment of that parliament."

The West Lothian question raises the anomaly of Scottish MPs in London being able to vote on English policy while English MPs would not be able to vote on policy in Scotland.



Northern exposure: Tony and Cherie Blair taking the Labour campaign into Sir Michael Forsyth's territory at Sterling Photograph: Drew Farrell

PM's private backer wings in with transport

Colin Brown

One of the Prime Minister's private backers, Sir Michael Bishop, was on part of the Prime Minister's tour to the Scottish Borders. Sir Michael, chairman of British Midland, is donating the use of a British Midland aircraft 737 jet for an undisclosed sum for the Prime Minister's campaign.

He joined the Prime Minister's battle bus for the final leg of the tour into Carlisle for a public meeting in the market square after the jet touched down at Carlisle Airport.

Sir Michael has underlined in the latest edition of *Voyager*, the airline magazine, his demands for intervention by the European Commission for more slots for his airline at Heathrow. He is fighting the



Bishop: Donating use of jet

proposed merger between BA and American Airlines and welcomed the intervention of EU Competition Commissioner Karel Van Miert. "Heathrow

acts as a hub airport for passengers from across Europe who want to fly across the Atlantic," Sir Michael said.

It was crucial that the deal was through. The gains from competition would not be furthered by handing every new slot released at Heathrow to a transatlantic carrier.

"Passengers need competition every bit as much when reaching this hub as they do when travelling on from it. On too many busy routes competition is still lacking. As the airline for Europe, we want to see competition in Europe continue to grow. And that is why we are campaigning for some of the slots given up by the transatlantic alliance negotiations to be handed to airlines who want to increase competition in Europe."

THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN

Labour's manifesto was the theme of the day, with Tony Blair unveiling his 10-point contract with the British people. Mr Blair told a packed press conference that the key issue of the election was trust. People had lost faith in government, he said, but new Labour deserved to be believed, not least because of its modernisation over the past three years. Labour promised only what it was able to deliver, he said.

Mr Blair's promises include more money for education and health, no increase in the top rate of tax, stable economic growth, low inflation, jobs for the young unemployed, tough measures on crime, the decentralising of political power and more public-private partnerships.

The Conservatives concentrated their efforts on attacking Labour, but the Liberal Democrats launched an appeal to women. Shirley Williams, who is taking an active part in the party's campaign, promised women life-long access to education, equal treatment within the NHS, safer pensions and a better deal in part-time work.

The Liberal Democrats, like Labour, have promised to reduce the role of women in public life. But they do not have gone as far, saying that within a decade a third of all people on public bodies should be female, and that Parliament should be more women-friendly.

KEY ARGUMENTS

The day's debate centred on Labour's plans, and on the amount of trust it deserved from the public and the other parties.

John Major dismissed the Labour manifesto as "more a con trick than a contract."

"I predict they'll tell you all of what they won't do, but only some of what they will do," Mr Major said.

"In six weeks they'll sell out in Europe. In three months they'll raise billions of pounds in tax and in 12 months they'll hand more power back to the unions. That's the reality of new Labour. That's the reality behind their wall of silence on the questions they won't answer," he continued.

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, dismissed both the other parties' manifestos in similar tones as "conjuring tricks".

Public services could not be improved without any extra investment, he said. The Liberal Democrat manifesto, which will be published this morning, would be the only one of the three to contain costed commitments, promises and undertakings.

It is the only national manifesto which came with a price list attached - "it will be a menu with prices".

GOOD DAY



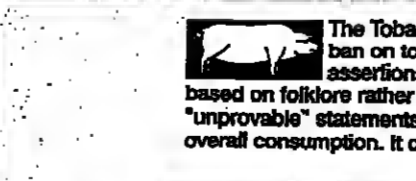
Tony Blair, who carried all before him with a manifesto of audacious modesty.

Promises we can keep, not promising the earth, he told journalists, who grumbled, "there's nothing new in it". Which was the point. It's time for (a little bit of) change. Just what the electorate ordered, according to the *Independent's* poll today. He even ducked the charge of ducking a TV debate with the Prime Minister.

ONE TO REMEMBER

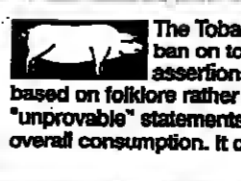
Newly-wed couple Michael and Majella Rigney thought Gretna Green was the perfect location for a quiet wedding and honeymoon. But within two hours of tying the knot, the Prime Minister, his entourage and the national media had descended on this normally tranquil spot. After being congratulated by the Majors, they were jumped on by waiting reporters. "We were hoping we were going to have a quiet wedding," Mr Rigney told them.

BAD DAY



The Conservative Party has spent the majority of the campaign to date trying to divert attention from sleaze. The sun shone briefly on Wednesday when commentators were provided with a manifesto-full of policies to discuss. But yesterday the policies were blown off the agenda again, this time by a six-foot cloth chicken. Since the fowl was spawned as a media stunt by Conservative Central Office, they cannot even complain at the coverage.

ROGWASH



The Tobacco Manufacturers' Association slammed Labour's proposed ban on tobacco advertising, saying it was based on unproven assertions. "This policy reflects nothing more than a political gesture based on folklore rather than fact," said the TMA, going on to speak in just the kind of "unprovable" statements it dislikes so much: "Advertising for tobacco is not related to overall consumption. It can only affect brand share."

THE OTHER PARTIES

Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party announced that it would launch its campaign next Tuesday, from the deck of a Cornish fishing boat. Only a few hours later Sir James scuppered the plan, because he feared the consequences of boarding the craft dressed in a suit.

MEDIA STAR



The Conservatives' man in a chicken suit, employed to follow Tony Blair until he agrees to demands for a television debate, was nowhere to be seen at the Labour manifesto launch. But media interest was intense following reports that he had fought off an attack from a headless chicken and another from a fox. By midday, Tony Chikken had also attracted the attentions of several other creatures including a rhinoceros and two teddy bears. The bears trailed him all morning, reportedly eating crisps and biscuits and smoking cigarettes. One gave his name as Tony Bear, of the Political Picnic Party.

Manifesto details: Education is at forefront of commitments to build a more inclusive society

Labour vision of reformed Britain

Tony Blair held up a dual message of caution and radicalism to the British electorate yesterday with the launch of his party's 1997 manifesto. The following is an edited text of the manifesto.

Education

Education, the manifesto says, is Labour's number one priority. The party promises that over the course of a five-year parliament, it would raise the proportion of national income spent on it.

There should be no return to the 11-plus, but comprehensive schools should be modernised with a focus on higher standards. All education authorities must prove every school is improving. A "fresh start" would be ordered for those that do not, and they would be closed down and opened again on the same site. In some cases, good schools would be allowed to take over bad ones.

Money saved from scrapping nursery vouchers would be used to guarantee places for four-year-olds, and targets would be set for universal provision for three-year-olds whose parents wanted it.

In primary schools, there would be testing for five-year-olds, and money from the phasing out of the Assisted Places scheme would be used to cut class sizes to less than 30 for five- to seven-year-olds.

Literacy summer schools would help to meet targets for every child to leave primary school with a reading age of 11 within a decade. A General Teaching Council would raise teaching standards, and in deprived areas there would be education action zones. British Telecom and cable companies would put schools on the internet.

Individual Learning Accounts would help adults to go back into education, and university students would be expected to repay the cost of their maintenance.

The economy

Labour would aim to spend wisely and tax fairly to ensure low inflation, rising living standards and high, stable employment levels. Economic stability is essential for sustained growth. Labour would seek to raise the trend rate of growth by strengthening the wealth-creating base.

Tax and spending

For two years, Labour would work within the departmental spending ceilings set by the Conservatives.

Labour's long-term aim is a lower starting rate of income tax of 10p in the pound. VAT on fuel would be cut to 5 per cent and there would be no extension of the tax to food, children's clothes, books, newspapers or public transport fares.

The inflation of 2.5 per cent or less would be matched, and the Bank of England reformed to ensure decision-making was more open. Labour would borrow only to invest and public debt would remain at a stable proportion of national income.

Departmental spending reviews would root out waste. A budget would be introduced within two months to bring in a windfall levy on the privatised utilities, to fund the welfare to work programme.

Health

Labour would raise spending on the National Health Service in real terms every year and put the money towards patient care. It would also cut spending on bureaucracy. As a result, extra resources would be channelled into patient care.

100,000 people would be removed from waiting lists and waiting for cancer surgery would be eliminated.

The internal market in the health service would be ended, and GPs and nurses would combine to plan local health services. Hospitals would be required to meet high standards, and managements would be held to account to performance levels.

A minister for public health would be appointed to improve the health of the nation, taking into account the effects of poverty, poor housing, unemployment and a polluted environment. Tobacco advertising would be banned.

Business

Competition law would be reformed and anti-competitive practices stopped. Labour would promote competition between the privatised utilities wherever possible.

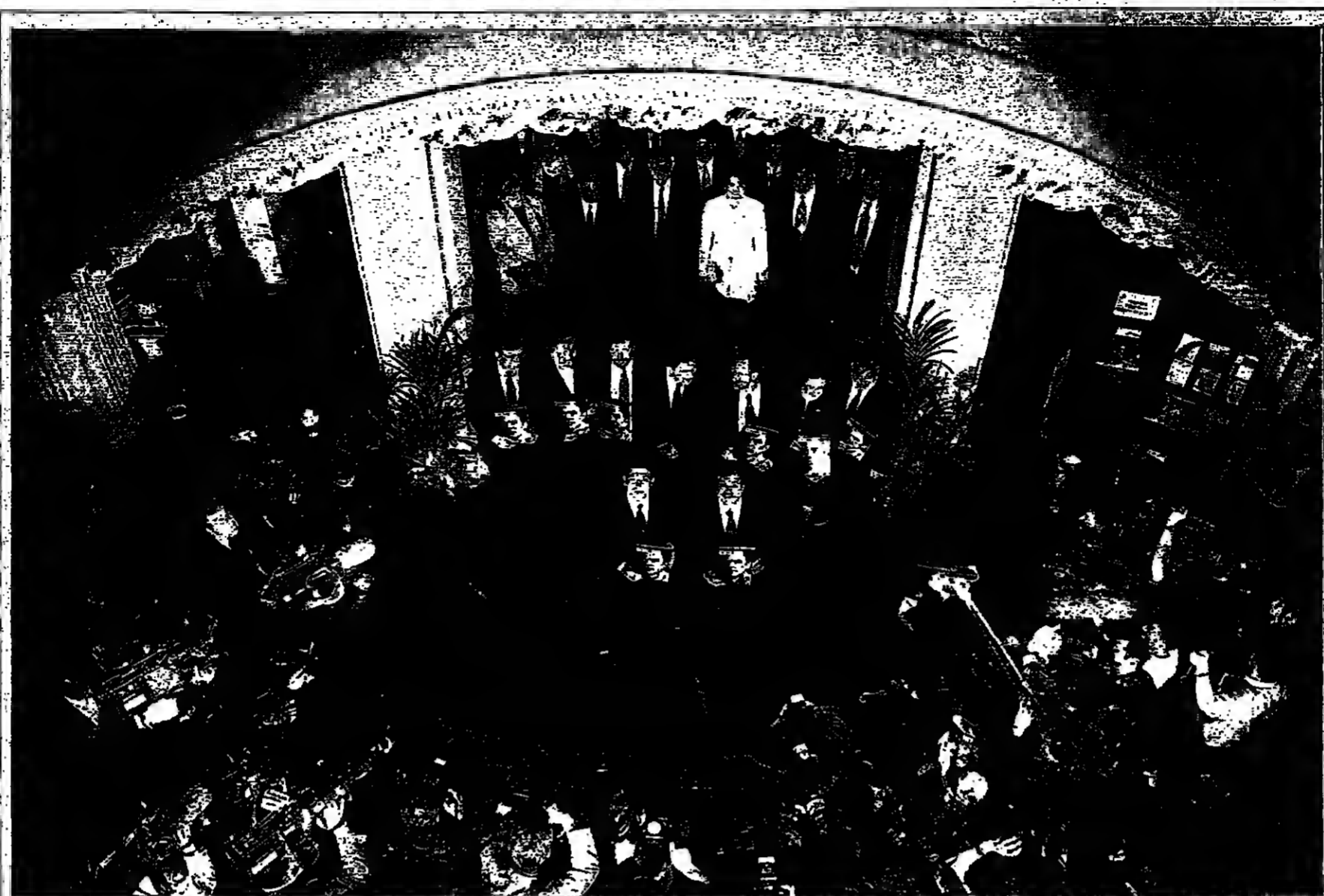
Labour would promote public-private partnerships and cut unnecessary red tape for small businesses. Advice and training would be improved through a university for industry and a reformed Business Links network. Regional Development Agencies would be set up.

Unions and wages

Key elements of the trade union legislation in the 1980s on ballots, picketing and industrial action would be retained. People should be free to join or not join a union and where a majority of the relevant workforce wanted to be represented by one, it should be recognised.

An independent low-pay commission would advise on a minimum wage, which would be set according to economic circumstances.

Employee Share Ownership plans and co-operatives would give workers a share in their companies.



First team: The Labour Party's Shadow Cabinet, after the launch of its manifesto yesterday.

Photograph: David Rose

Blair doesn't promise a rose garden

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair's big claim for his manifesto yesterday was that it "does not promise the earth," an unusual line for any party leader to take four weeks before the voters go to the polls.

In fact, "new Labour because Britain deserves better" is full of promises, for everything from more flexible mortgages to safer cycle routes around schools.

However, what distinguishes the manifesto from its 1992 forerunner, is the absence of major spending pledges or tax hikes.

Five years ago, Neil Kinnock was able to promise £5 more for every pensioner, £9.95 on child benefit, £1.10 for the NHS and a na-

tional minimum wage of £3.40 per hour. The list went on: £25m for new ambulances, £20m for reading recovery programmes for pupils, £300 to "eliminate outside toilets" in schools, £600 funeral payments on request and free eye tests for all.

There were also promises of better pay for public-sector workers, a new top tax rate of 50 per cent for those earning over £40,000, the restoration of benefit rights to 16 and 17 year-olds and a return to full grants for students.

The 1997 manifesto does contain specifics, but they are of a different sort. Many of them are vague specifics, designed not to frighten off nervous first-time Labour voters and without price tags attached. A Low Pay Commission to look at the minimum wage; a review of pen-

sions; cuts in NHS bureaucracy to raise money; regional development agencies to help business. All are meant to be reassuring, intimate to the subtleties of the Conservative prying calculators.

The language of Labour's new document is thrifting, almost 1980s in its tone. Where five years ago the party of the left talked of public investment, social partnership, and national infrastructure projects, new Labour has a very different lexicon. Competition, enterprise, profits and the market are all key words. "We see healthy profits as an essential motor of a dynamic market economy... we will build a new partnership with business," the new manifesto says. While cautious, the document also has a rather grandiose, millennial streak running

through it. "I want a Britain that does not shuffle into the new millennium afraid of the future," Mr Blair writes in his introduction. "The millennium symbolises a new era opening up for Britain."

Where Neil Kinnock's manifesto foreword was worthy, talking of fairness, of running down public services and of equality for people of all ages, classes and ethnic backgrounds, Tony Blair's is expansive. "I believe in Britain. It is a great country with a great history. The British people are a great people. But I believe Britain can and must be better," he writes in an opening paragraph, which has echoes of John Major's warm beer and spinsters cycling to church. But, for all these grand words,

there was still more poetry in the 1992 manifesto, quite literally.

Before the last election, Adrian Hinch penned a verse for Neil Kinnock's "Byline", drawing an almost apocalyptic vision of a Tory Britain awash with cardboard cities, leaking classrooms, peeling waiting rooms and polluted streams.

At last cardboard cities are swept away beneath my bridges. The red blue landscape of white suddenly blue with bright red trees.

Whether a spending pledge was uttered by Neil Kinnock to Mr Hinch for his efforts is not recorded. Either way, the ever-cautious Mr Blair chose not to repeat the verse.

Final draft is realisation of leader's dreams

Steve Boggan

After learning that Labour's 10 promises to the nation were scribbled down by Tony Blair in his back garden, it should come as no surprise to find that the manifesto proper was drawn up largely by the party leader.

Unlike the Tories' manifesto, which relies heavily on ideas from policy advisers rather than the party leader, senior Labour sources said theirs is mostly a crystallisation of Mr Blair's hopes and dreams.

"He wrote the introduction a long time ago and out a word has been changed," said one senior aide. "Large parts of it were written by him - including the chapter on education and the last chapter [on leadership in Europe] and everything else has gone through him. It's very much a part of him."

Based on the draft manifesto put before the Labour conference last



The advisers (from left): Robin Cook, Alistair Darling and Lord Irvine of Lairg.

year - and subsequently approved by 95 per cent of the membership - the 40-page, 19,000-word document passed through three tiers.

First, shadow ministers and their advisers would formulate and thrust out broad policy. Robin Cook, as chairman of Labour's policy forum, oversaw policy development with Mr

Blair, John Prescott, the deputy leader and Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor. The proposals had to be submitted for costing by Alistair Darling, Labour's Treasury spokesman. There were advisers - such as Ed Balls in Mr Brown's office - but, according to aides, "The politicians were the brains."

Over several years, leading academics, interest groups and business and industrial forums were canvassed for opinions before solid ideas were adopted. Next along the process came David Miliband, head of Labour's policy unit, Jonathan Powell, Mr Blair's chief-of-staff, and Lord Irvine of Lairg, the shadow

Lord Chancellor. Lord Irvine, one of Mr Blair's mentors and head of the chambers first joined by Mr Blair and his wife, Cherie, as young barristers, had a considerable input.

Finally, it passed to Mr Blair's office for approval by the leader, and his team led by Mr Prescott, Mr Brown, and Mr Cook. It was also considered by Mr Blair's campaign director, Peter Mandelson, and his press secretary, Alistair Campbell.

The aide said: "It was a gradual process. There were a few drafts, but not many, and the draft presented to conference has not changed much - the pledge on tax is new. Apart from that, it's all run smoothly. The final touches to policies on Europe and the unions were completed only about a month ago."

"In some ways, it was easier for us than the Tories. We had a clear view of what was wrong and where we wanted to go."

A Labour government would resist unreasonable public sector pay demands.

Welfare to work

A one-off windfall levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities would fund a programme to give 250,000 under-25s opportunities for work, education or training. Every young person unemployed for more than six months would be given a job or training.

Four programmes would be offered to unemployed young people: private-sector jobs with a £60-per-week employers' rebate for six months; voluntary work, paying benefit plus a fixed sum for six months; full-time study on an approved course; or a job with the environment task force, linked to Labour's citizens' service scheme.

A new Target 2000 programme will replace the Youth Training Scheme, offering high-quality education and training.

For the long-term unemployed, there would be a scheme offering tax rebates of £75 per week to employers for six months if they took on someone who had been out of work for two years.

Lone parents whose children are at school would be offered extra advice to get them back into work, and new "employment zones" would offer help to all unemployed people.

There would be a clampdown on Housing Benefit fraud.

Law and order

Labour would be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. A "zero tolerance" approach would ensure petty criminality among young offenders is addressed. Community safety orders would deal with threatening and disruptive neighbours. Child protection orders would deal with young children suffering neglect by parents because they are left out on their own far too late at night. A new offence of racial harassment would be created.

Local authorities would be required to set targets for the reduction of crime and disorder locally.

Youth crime

The manifesto reiterates the pledge to halve the time it takes to get persistent young offenders from arrest to sentencing. Cautions would be replaced by a single, final warning. There would be new parental responsibility orders to make parents face up to their responsibility for their children's misbehaviour.

Drugs

Labour would appoint an anti-drugs supremo to co-ordinate the battle against drugs across government

departments. The use of compulsory drug testing would be piloted and judges and magistrates would be able to issue treatment orders on drug offenders. The drug problem in prisons would be addressed with random drug testing of all prisoners.

Guns

There would be legislation to allow MPs a free vote for a complete ban on handguns.

Families

A national childcare strategy would plan provision to match the requirements of the modern labour market and help parents, especially women, to balance family and working life. Labour supports the right of employees not to be forced to work more than 48 hours per week, to an annual holiday entitlement and to limited, unpaid parental leave.

Housing

Councils would be able to reinvest receipts from council house sales in building new ones and rehabilitating old ones. Tenants to multi-occupation houses would be protected. A new form of tenancy, commonhold, would enable people living in flats to own their homes individually and to own the common parts collectively. Rules on purchase of freeholds by

leaseholders would be simplified. The duty on local authorities to protect those who are homeless through no fault of their own would be reinstated. Labour is consulting on the best way to tackle the problem of gazumping.

Pensions

The basic state pension would be retained as the foundation of pension provision and would continue to be updated in line with prices. Labour would create a new framework, stakeholder pensions, involving partnerships between financial services companies, employers and employees. Labour would retain SERPS.

Couples divorcing would have to split pensions between themselves. Local authorities would be able to continue providing old people's homes. Labour would define the standard of services which people are entitled to expect from health, housing and social services. Labour would set up a review of the central areas of insecurity for elderly people.

The environment

Government departments would have to promote policies to sustain the environment. Parliament should have an environmental audit to ensure high standards across government. Labour sees no economic

case for building new nuclear power stations.

Transport

Labour's goal would be to win more passengers and freight for rail. There would be more effective and accountable regulation and Labour would ensure public subsidy does not serve the public interest. A new rail authority would be created to provide a strategic programme for the development of the railways. London Underground would not be privatised but a new public/private partnership would be created to improve it. Bus services would be regulated and more bus lanes provided.

Labour remains unconvinced about the need for 44-ton lorries. There would be a strategic review of the roads programme.

The countryside

Labour favours a moratorium on large-scale sales of Forestry Commission land. There would be a free vote in Parliament on whether hunting with hounds should be banned.

Arts and culture

Labour proposes to set up a National Endowment for Science and the Arts to sponsor young talent. Well-known artists would be encouraged to support young talent by donating

copyright and royalties to the fund.

Labour would review the distribution of lottery proceeds and aim to ensure the lottery is administered efficiently. When the current contract runs out, Labour would aim to seek an efficient, not-for-profit operator. Labour proposes a new millennium commission to support a range of education, environment and public health projects after the Millennium Exhibition is finished.

Sport

Labour would bring the policy of forcing schools to sell off playing fields to an end. It would back the bid to host the 2006 soccer World Cup and aim to attract the Olympics to Britain.

Media

The regulatory framework for media and broadcasting should reflect the realities of a far more open and competitive economy and enormous technological advances.

Political reform

The right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords would be ended as the first stage in a process of reform to make the Lords more democratic. Life peers will continue to be appointed, with an emphasis on crossbenchers and Labour says no political party should seek a majority in the House of Lords. Prime Ministers' Question Time would be made more effective.

There would be a referendum on the voting system for the House of Commons. On the funding of political parties, Labour would ban foreign donations and ask the Nolan committee to consider how the funding of political parties should be regulated and reformed. A Freedom of Information Act would lead to more open government.

Devolution

Labour would enact legislation as soon as possible after the election to allow the people of Scotland and Wales to vote in separate referendums on proposals for a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh assembly.

The referendums would take place not later than autumn 1997 and, if the vote is in favour, Labour would introduce substantive devolution proposals in Parliament.

Local government

Local decision making should be less constrained by central government and more accountable to local people. Councils would have a new duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. To ensure greater accountability, there would be annual council elections with a proportion of councillors elected every year. Although universal council-tax capping would go, Labour would retain reserve powers to control excessive rises.

Councils would not be forced to put services out to tender. Every council would be forced to publish a local performance plan and the Audit Commission would get additional powers to monitor performance and efficiency.

London would get a strategic authority and a mayor, both directly elected, which would take responsibility for economic regeneration, planning, policing, transport and environmental protection.

Labour would establish regional chambers, where there was clear popular consent.

Northern Ireland

Labour would continue a bipartisan approach. It is committed to reconciliation between the two traditions and a political settlement which could command the support of both.

Europe

Labour has set out a detailed agenda for reform, leading from the front during the UK presidency in the first half of 1998. Labour would aim for rapid completion of the single market, enlargement of the European Union, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, greater openness and democracy in EU institutions, retention of the national veto and signing the Social Charter. Any decision about the single currency would be preceded by a referendum.

Defence

Labour would conduct a review to consider how the role of the armed forces should be adjusted. Labour would retain Trident and press for multilateral negotiations towards reductions in nuclear weapons. Labour would work for implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and ban the import, export and manufacture of all forms of anti-personnel landmines with an immediate moratorium of their use.

International relations and aid

Labour would press for a reform of the UN, including an early resolution of its funding crises and a more effective role in peace-keeping.

A cabinet minister would lead a new department of international development. Labour would make the protection and promotion of human rights central to foreign policy.

Jeff's 10.12.20

Manifesto analysis: Promises to stick to Tory public spending plans mean tax burden must rise

Labour to toe Tory line on economy

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

We have heard from the party of boom and bust, of tax and spend, on how it would manage the economy. Yesterday, it was Labour's turn.

The new Labour manifesto published yesterday was lighter on specifics than Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown's many and lengthy speeches and is designed to send out two messages about economic policy.

First, a Labour government would manage the economy responsibly. It would retain the 2.5 per cent inflation target and outdo the Government by actually hitting it. It would stick to the existing public spending plans for two years.

Second, Labour policies would make a difference to what, 15 years ago, we would have called the supply side of the economy – to incentives for work, business efficiency and tax reform to promote saving.

What makes the manifesto more than an exercise in out-lying the Tories is a matter of tone. Unlike the Conservative version, this one talks about how the poor and unemployed could share in the benefits of a growing economy.

Questions of distribution, of fairness as Labour would put it, are turning out to be where the two main parties differ most on

economic policy. For although most of the partisan sound and fury is about big picture issues such as tax and spending, whoever is in government after the election will face exactly the same constraints on that front.

A Labour government, just like the Conservatives, would probably have to raise taxes at some point. The manifesto repeats Gordon Brown's pledge to stick to the existing public spending plans for two years, meanwhile conducting a thorough review of spending priorities. It suggests – optimistically, according to many economists – that lower unemployment can deliver big savings on social security expenditure.

The manifesto also pledges to follow the "golden rule" for government borrowing: over the course of the business cycle, the government will only borrow to finance investment. The rule implies lower borrowing on average than the Conservatives have achieved. The grim arithmetic of the public finances means these only add up if the tax burden rises.

Labour has pledged that the basic and higher rates of income tax will not go up for at least five years. That leaves open the possibility of higher income tax through limiting tax allowances and reliefs – the biggest of which is mortgage interest tax relief, or Miras. Alternatively,



Sharing in the future: The Labour Party has made education the top priority in its manifesto, published yesterday

Photograph: Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert

Labour could tax companies more heavily, perhaps by stopping insurance companies and pension funds from claiming back the advance corporation tax on the receipts of dividends from the companies they invest in. Many analysts think this measure likely because it would end the pressure on companies to pay high dividends rather than retain more of their profits for investment.

The tougher task for a Labour Government will be

sticking to the Conservatives' spending plans. These involve slashing real-terms growth in spending from about 3 per cent a year in the five years from 1992 to less than 0.5 per cent a year for the next three years. If it can be done at all, it implies a wrenching shift between some kinds of expenditure and others.

The Labour equivalent of clear blue water emerges in manifesto pledges to introduce a "sensible" national minimum wage, to sign the Social Chap-

ter, to get young people and single parents into work and make sure 16- and 17-year-olds have achieved a minimum qualification. Yet even here the water is shallower than the two main parties would like to admit.

Take Labour's welfare-to-work measures, to be funded by the windfall tax. Both parties recognise that long-term unemployment can only be reduced by getting the people concerned into jobs – any jobs – because the only way to move

up the employment ladder is to get on to one of its rungs.

The Conservatives favour the stick – welfare and the Job Seekers' Allowance. Labour favours the carrot – rebates for employers, or job opportunities in the voluntary sector or an environment task force, alongside the number one priority of raising levels of education and skill. The stick is cheaper, the carrot fairer, but they point in the same direction.

Leading article, page 21

What Labour could raise from other taxes

Abolish Miras	£2.4bn
Abolish married couples' allowance	£2.8bn
Restrict personal allowances to 23%	£1.5bn
VAT on private education and health	£1.5bn
Withdraw tax credit on Advance Corporation Tax	£5bn
Total	£13.2bn

(excludes Windfall Tax)
Source: NatWest Markets

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Strategists fudge issue of right to union recognition

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

One of the few areas of policy where there is "clear blue water" between the Conservative Party and Labour is the issue of industrial relations.

In its manifesto, however, there are signs that Labour may be watering down its policy on union recognition, following pressure from employers.

In previous policy statements, Labour has indicated that unions should have the legal right to recognition where a majority of employees vote for it. In the manifesto yesterday, however, Labour strategists seem to have "fudged" the issue so that unions might have to show they

have more than half the workforce in membership before bargaining rights are granted.

The document also makes it clear that there will be no instant legislation, prescribing a period of "full consultation" before a law is introduced. That would also give a Blair administration further scope to amend the proposals. The delay is also an acknowledgement that there could be substantial difficulties in framing the legislation and arriving at system of penalties for employers who flout the law.

Labour makes clear there would be no return to the "flying pickets", secondary action and strikes without ballots of the 1970s. Key elements of the union legislation of the 80s

would stay, the document says. Despite its "New Labour" flavour however – and despite Labour's keenness to show no favouritism towards unions – the proposals on industrial relations are considerably different to those of the Conservatives.

In their manifesto, the Tories registered their determination to strip away legal immunities from unions so that employers and members of the public could sue them over industrial action which had a "disproportionate or excessive" impact. Arguably this would amount to the most restrictive union law passed in peacetime for 90 years and would make effective industrial action impossible in a wide range of services and industries.

A further difference lies in Labour's support for the Social Chapter of the European Union, although the manifesto makes clear that a Blair government would not be wedded to traditional interventionism. The document says a Labour government would use its influence in Europe to ensure that the chapter promoted "employability" rather than "industrialism".

While the Conservative manifesto explicitly rules out a statutory minimum wage, Labour yesterday reiterated its intention to introduce such a law. It would remove the "worst excesses of low pay" and cut the bill for in-work benefits through which taxpayers subsidise employers who pay low wages.

SCHOOLS AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Back-to-basics pledge will free teachers from strict curriculum

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Labour is preparing to end the nine-subject primary school curriculum. Inner-city primaries will be allowed to abandon parts of the curriculum so that they can concentrate on the basics.

And secondary schools will be given more freedom to send 14- to 16-year-olds on work experience or vocational courses instead of keeping them in the classroom. If the scheme is successful, all schools are likely to be offered a less prescriptive curriculum when it is revised in 2000.

This will reopen the debate about what should be taught in schools. Margaret Thatcher

originally wanted the national curriculum to include only English, maths and science but she lost the battle against Kenneth Baker, the former secretary of state for education, who insisted on nine subjects in primary and 10 in secondary.

Labour announced new "inner-city action zones" where schools with poor exam results, local authorities and business will be expected to draw up action plans detailing targets for academic performance, better discipline and less truancy. They will be able to apply for the national curriculum to be relaxed so that primary schools can spend an hour a day on both literacy and numeracy.

Though Labour emphasises that grant-maintained schools will not close, their freedoms will be curtailed. They will lose their financial advantages, have to appoint governors from local authorities, and, most importantly, will have to agree their admissions policy with the council. If the school and the authority fail to agree, the case will be considered by an independent arbiter.

A Labour government would advise teachers on how to teach. Traditional methods such as phonics will be recommended for reading and whole-class teaching for maths.

Like the Conservatives, Labour is suggesting that

schools should be encouraged to specialise, but its proposals are vaguer. It says: "All parents should be offered real choice, through good-quality schools, each with its own strength and ethos."

One of the biggest question marks over Labour promises is money. The party says that it will use £180 million a year from the Assisted Places Scheme to cut infant class sizes, but some experts believe the cost will be much greater.

There is also a promise to spend a higher (unspecified) slice of national income on education but the funds available will depend on reducing the social security bill.



Nurses will take part in joint commissioning under Labour's plans

HEALTH

New food safety agency but little reform of NHS

Annabel Ferriman

Labour's watchwords are caution for the NHS and radicalism for public health. It is going to refine and improve the NHS internal market but tackle the food and tobacco industries head on.

A headline in the manifesto proclaims that Labour will end the Tory internal market, but a close reading of the detail suggests it will do no such thing. Out goes the purchaser-provider split, but in comes the planner-provider distinction ("the planning and provision of care are necessary and distinct functions, and will remain so", the manifesto says).

Out goes the small GP fundholder (though the manifesto does not categorically say it will be abolished) and in comes joint commissioning, in which "GPs and nurses will take the lead in combining together locally to plan local health ser-

vices". Out will go one-year contracts between GPs and trusts; in will come three- to five-year agreements. The system should work better, but will not be a thousand miles away from the present set-up.

What the party lacks in radicalism for the NHS, however, it makes up for by its policies on public health. It promises to ban tobacco advertising (to cries of joy from the British Medical Association, which has campaigned to this end for many years); set up a new post of minister for public health; and establish an independent food standards agency, to remove responsibility for food safety from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which is seen as too closely allied to the farming lobby.

On the issue of resources, it promises to raise spending in real terms every year, but "to spend the money on patients not bureaucracy". In favouring doc-

tors and nurses over bureaucrats, Labour is of course repeating the mantra of all political parties (one cannot wait to see a party with the slogan "more power to the pen-pushers"), but it can do so with a little more conviction than the Tories, who showed astonishing chutzpah yesterday in proclaiming their spending had always concentrated on "priorities, not wasteful bureaucracy".

The first £100m saved from running the internal market, will be put into patient care, to end, in particular, all waits for cancer surgery, it says.

Other imaginative, though secondary, pledges, include: eliminating mixed-sex wards; promoting new developments in telemedicine, so expert advice is brought from regional centres of excellence to neighbourhood level; and measuring the quality of outcomes from hospital treatment, rather than merely the quantity.

CRIME

Tough talk over law and order

Patricia Wynn Davies

"Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" was coined by Tony Blair when he was shadow home secretary, long before becoming party leader was a realistic option.

The manifesto confirms that the approach would continue to underpin the law and order policy of a Labour government, although the subject of attacking the causes of crime disappointingly merits just seven words: "by our measures to relieve social deprivation." There is a related message in the section on strengthening family life, however. "Families are the core of our society," it says. "They should teach right from wrong."

Much more forcibly spelt out is Labour's claim to be the "party of law and order in Britain today" and its accusation that the Conservatives have presided over the worst law and order record of any government since the Second World War. There are five main initiatives to do with managing crime itself: fast-track punishment for persistent young offenders; the reform of the Crown Prosecution Service to cut bureaucracy, inefficiency and the downgrading of offences; more police on the beat; a crackdown on petty crime and neighbourhood disorder; and a first parliamentary vote to ban all handguns.

Wisely, and in contrast to some of the enthusiastic claims by the last government, the party suggests that it could have the time it takes to get persistent young offenders from arrest to sentencing. And Labour has commendably grasped the opportunity to pledge to create a specific new offence of racially motivated violence. It also repeats earlier pledges to "implement an effective sentencing system for all the main offences to ensure greater consistency and stricter punishment for serious repeat offenders."

Alongside the pledges of "zero tolerance" of young criminals and neglectful parents, elsewhere the manifesto offers something in the field of positive rights with a pledge to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. Immigration procedures for those wanting to join a husband and wife in this country would be reformed to remove the unfair results that can follow from the "primary purpose" rule, while applicants for asylum would be ensured "swift and fair decisions".

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Councils to invest funds from selling off homes

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Labour's top priorities at the Department of the Environment will concern reforming local government's powers and finances, pushing up the rate at which public sector homes are built and refurbished, and speeding up urban regeneration. Council homes for rent will continue to be transferred to

not-for-profit organisations which will seek funding for badly needed renovation and maintenance from the private sector. But Labour also believes that allowing councils to invest the money they make from selling council homes will increase the rate at which housing for low-income families is built and refurbished.

The funding formula for local government will be re-

designed so that prosperous councils like Westminster get less money from central government and regional authorities get more. That change will be in place for a November Budget this year. Local councils will be given a legal duty to promote social, economic and environmental improvements in their area.

Another priority is setting up an elected, London-wide strate-

gic authority – provided that Londoners vote for one in a referendum. The mayor of this reborn Greater London Council will also be directly elected.

"Crude and universal council tax capping should go," says the manifesto, but a Labour government would give itself reserve powers to control council tax powers. And if a council is shown by the Audit Commission to be acting in an

incompetent or profligate way, "government will, where necessary, send in a management team with full powers to remedy failure".

Green issues figure in Tony Blair's introduction to the document and his list of 10 key pledges for the first five years of a Labour government. "We will put concern for the environment at the heart of policymaking so that it is not an add-

on extra," he writes. Uta Bellion, head of policy with Friends of the Earth, said: "There is a lack of clear targets and commitments, but we think Labour are waking up to the green cause. It is the greenest manifesto they have ever produced, and it is stronger than the Conservatives'."

There is a hint Labour might introduce "green taxes" on pollution. "Work should be en-

couraged through the tax system, environmental pollution should be discouraged," the manifesto says. The Tory government's plans to cut the cost of the tax disc for low pollution lorries will be continued.

Labour wants renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power boosted but "we see no economic case for the building of any new nuclear power stations".

election '97

Pledges fail to woo disaffected Tories

Michael Streeter

The Opposition party's insistent message that the Conservatives cannot be trusted over their election promises is echoed by voters in key marginal seats, according to *The Independent's* focus group of disaffected Tory supporters.

Among the voters in Redditch, home of so-called Mordred Man, the Thatcherite Tories whom Labour is trying to win over, there is doubt whether John Major's party could keep its promise to switch personal tax allowances between spouses looking after dependants. Some fear that even if such a plan was put into action, it would be paid for by simply shifting the burden



of taxation elsewhere. Warehouse worker Adrian Blick, 30, and his partner, Lisa, are not married but say in any case the estimated £18 a week the allowance might bring would provide scant comfort on their tight budgetary margins. "We need our two wages just to pay the mortgage and the other bills," said Mr Blick, who is now determined to vote Labour. "And the money is going to come from somewhere. I can't see this being much

of an encouragement to anyone."

Radio frequency engineer Steven Marriott, said the allowance held few attractions for him and his wife and he will wait until all the manifestos are published before deciding which party to vote for. He added: "I'm more interested in working to get good job prospects. They [the Tories] are just chasing votes like they did before over tax cuts. I'm not sure I believe them."

The reaction from Mark Redfern, 29, an engineer, was equally sceptical. "If they really did this, it would be quite good for some people. But they let me down last time over taxes. And where is the money going to come from? They would just tax me more; it would

not benefit us. John Major says he wants to talk about the real issues but the issue is that he has lied to people."

Former British Gas travel manager, Roger Frost, 54, dismissed the Tory manifesto proposal as a "gimmick". He said: "They have had 18 years and they could have done this years ago. Why now?" To make the Tory manifesto offered little new and welcomed Labour's plans to improve deprived schools, but believes the issue was about leadership. "John Major is okay but weak. In my mind Tony Blair is stronger."

Even among those considering voting Conservative again, there was limited enthusiasm for the tax

alliance. For Denise Sparkes, 35, who works in a supermarket and is a dressmaker, the main concern is nursery education. She said: "It sounds attractive but I would still have to go to work. I have two children and another on the way."

David Bignall, a former British Telecom engineer, wondered how the new scheme would be financed. "Everyone will think they are doing it just because of the election." He applauded the strength of the economy, which is the main reason why he wants to vote Conservative again and says his only real concern about the Tories is "over sleaze". "They seem to keep shooting themselves in the foot. But I suppose we have to look further than

people's private lives, and look at politics as a whole."

However, there was some comfort for John Major from Susan Lovett, 38, a former sales consultant who now stays at home to look after her two children. Mrs Lovett said: "It [the tax allowance proposal] is an excellent idea. There are a lot of women in my position looking after children at home."

She said it would make her even more likely to vote for the Tories again. "What concerns me about Labour, is that they are not answering direct questions," Mrs Lovett said and regrets how much sleaze had dominated the campaign so far. "It's a pity that we have not really got down to the main issues."

political shorts

Mellor takes on Sir James

David Mellor launched an attack on his Referendum Party rival for his Putney constituency in west London yesterday, calling Sir James Goldsmith a "playboy politician".

Unveiling a £75,000 advertising campaign opposing a fifth terminal at Heathrow airport, Mr Mellor said the Referendum Party leader's flirtation with politics was "little more than an act of eccentricity".

Using Terminal Five as an example, Mr Mellor said: "When the Putney Society wrote to all the candidates asking them their views about Terminal Five someone on his [Goldsmith's] team wrote back and said he couldn't really say anything because he hadn't formulated any opinions." Clare Garner

Beaconsfield selects

The Tory candidate to replace disgraced former minister Tim Smith in his Beaconsfield seat will be selected tomorrow.

The MP for St Ives, David Harris, and John Major's former Parliamentary Private Secretary, Tony Fawell, who lost his Stockport seat in 1992, are both believed to be on the shortlist.

Mr Smith stood down as the candidate on 26 March after he had admitted receiving envelopes stuffed with £50 notes from Harrods boss Mohamed Al-Fayed.

Labour's capital lead

Labour has a 32-point lead over the Conservatives in the capital, according to an opinion poll in yesterday's *London Evening Standard*.

A MORI poll puts Labour in the capital on 59 per cent, the Tories on 27 per cent and the Liberal Democrats on 10 per cent.

Jail population soars

The total population of sentenced and remand prisoners will reach 74,500 by the year 2005, an increase of 19,200 from the average 1996 population of 55,300, according to the latest long-term Home Office projections, published yesterday. The figures do not take account of the estimated effects of the heavier sentencing provisions in the Crime (Sentences) Act. According to the Prison Service's short-term predictions, the current jail population of 59,356 will rise to 62,000 by the end of August. Patricia Wynn Davis

Hamiltons peek outside as media caravan moves on

Jojo Moyes

"Excuse me if I looked fierce when I opened the door," said Christine Hamilton. "It's just that at the moment I tend to expect the worst."

This is not surprising. Yesterday marked the Hamiltons' first day in weeks without a media camp at the end of their drive; a camp which has ensured virtual house arrest since last Sunday for Neil Hamilton, the Tory MP at the centre of persisting sleaze allegations.

"If you want to include the fact that they were camped outside our flat in London from the day the news broke that the Downing report wasn't coming out, we're just ending our third week," Mrs Hamilton said.

She and her husband were still "lying low" as she put it yesterday, but despite *The Independent's* appearance, Mrs Hamilton, one of the most robust of Tory wives, was in an amenable mood.

Over the past week, cameramen and reporters have braved "the Hamilton rue", up the long, daffodil-lined drive that leads to their home in Alderley Edge, Cheshire, to receive epithets bestowed upon them by Mrs Hamilton, the mildest of which included "reptile" and "snakes".

She informed waiting reporters that if Neil resigned, "which he won't", or even if she had an affair with the milkman - "which I won't" - they would be the last to know, as she would call the Press Association instead.

The only newspaper to speak to the elusive MP in the first week of the Conservative election campaign has been the local *Knutsford Guardian*. Reporter Paul Broster said Mr Hamilton had "never locked himself away to us" because the newspaper "always tried to be fair" but it had never doorstepped him. Mr Hamilton's home being "out of our area".

It is not just the Hamiltons who have been under siege. The first words of his agent, Peter McDowell, on being contacted were: "Don't tell me. You've heard a rumour from the *Guardian* that Mr Hamilton will stand down this weekend." He wasn't. Mr McDowell was keeno to add.

Despite Mr Hamilton's non-appearance in public, according to Mr McDowell, the MP for Tatoo has spent his time usefully on the telephone talking to constituents prior to the selection meeting next Tuesday. He had also held a series of evening meetings with local constituents in their homes after



Fenced in: Christine Hamilton wagging her finger at the press over the hedge of her Cheshire home Photograph: Craig Baston

reporters left, "where he's been telling people the facts of all this". Details of who Mr Hamilton had been meeting, he said, were private. "But he has been about these past few evenings. I don't think the watchdogs at the end of the drive

have been particularly efficient," he added happily.

Mr Hamilton's campaign, Mr McDowell said, has not been affected by the "siege". He would be out and about again after the dissolution of Parliament on the

eighth and his campaign would be conducted "as before". "In local areas, he will be going out canvassing during the day, meeting people. In the evenings he'll be visiting the odd pub."

Until then, the Hamiltons stay

in the peace of their home, bracing themselves for the next onslaught, behind the sign that warns of a non-existent dog and - perhaps a scarier deterrent - a cardboard cut-out of Baroness Thatcher sitting by the door.



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مكتبة من الأصيل

Unions speak out over vow of silence

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Union leaders yesterday fell over themselves to deny allegations that they had taken a secret vow of silence during the election so as not to embarrass Labour.

The accusation was made in yesterday's *Daily Mail* which said that union general secretaries would be "as mute as Trappist monks" during the hustings.

The paper said that leading trade unionists agreed at a meeting two weeks ago to remain silent in case they detracted from the support the party seems to be attracting in Middle England.

Senior union officials described the front-page story as "rubbish", arguing that most of the time the media was not interested in their views on the general election.

Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said it was full of "speculation and misrepresentation" and challenged the newspaper to grant him space to tell readers why they should be supporting "New Labour".

He said: "Far from keeping silent during this election campaign I have a full schedule of commitments to take part in meetings around the country." Mr Morris was due to be interviewed on television last night to give his views on the Labour manifesto.

Rodney Bickerstaffe, leader of public services union Unison, denied there had been any agreement and said he would be taking part in the hustings. Mr Bickerstaffe has, however, been more circumspect about his support for the Labour Party than most union leaders, because Unison has two political funds, one of which is entirely independent of Labour.

John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB general

union, said it was "ridiculous" to suggest there had been any conspiracy. "This election is about politics, not union leaders. We will be doing our best to help Labour," Mr Edmonds said.

Lew Adams, leader of Aslef, the train drivers' union, who was among those said by the *Mail* to have taken the vow of "Omer-to", would be launching a campaign in his union's journal urging members to vote Labour. Mr Adams wrote in a recent edition that he was sceptical about Labour's promises to reform employment law.

Roger Lyons, leader of the MSF manufacturing union, was on holiday yesterday, but when he returned would be meeting his members in marginal constituencies, a spokesman said. "That is hardly the activity of a Trappist monk."

Despite their denials however, it is clear that union leaders are not as "high profile" as they have been in previous elections. That is partly because they acknowledge they could be more of an electoral hindrance than help. Tony Blair, the Labour leader, is also keen to put considerable distances between the party and unions.

Nevertheless, it is unlikely there has been any formal agreement to keep silent.

What has been clear over the last few years is that there has been an unspoken pact between the two wings of the movement over policies. The party has told unions they could have their union recognition laws and a national minimum wage provided they did not wield their block vote to disrupt the change from Old to New Labour.

The Labour leadership has been keen to keep unions on board because of their provide most of the party's funds. Union officials are also active in canvassing and provide administrative support.



Vintage performance: Socialist Labour Party leader Arthur Scargill launching his campaign in the Lysaght Institute for the Newport East seat

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Scargill gets personal over Newport seat

Tony Heath

The Red Flag is being unfurled in South Wales where Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party is taking on "turncoat" Alan Howarth.

Mr Howarth, the Tory MP who in 1995 crossed the floor to join Labour, has been given Newport East, a constituency which looks as safe and solidly Labour as any in the country.

The Labour leadership has been keen to keep unions on board because of their provide most of the party's funds. Union officials are also active in canvassing and provide administrative support.

Socialist Labour Party leader to stand against 'turncoat' Alan Howarth

were once powerful steel masters in the area.

From a stage in the institute's hall, backed by ruffled, peach-coloured curtains which looked as though they had been borrowed from the set of *Stravinsky's Bolshoi*, the Australian film in which the Terpsichorean old guard gets its comeuppance, Mr Scargill delivered a vintage performance.

The National Union of Mineworkers' president told an audience of nearly 200 that he had decided to stand because

Mr Howarth had been a member of a Conservative Party bitterly opposed to trade unionism in general and the miners in particular.

"Was my decision to stand in Newport East personal?" he boomed rhetorically. "You bet your life it's personal."

Mr Scargill lashed out at Labour at regular intervals during a speech lasting almost an hour. "It's said you can't put a cigarette paper between Tory and Labour policies. I wouldn't co-ordinate a cigarette paper

by trying to," he said. The choice in the constituency was between a Tory mark one, a Tory mark two (Mr Howarth) and a true Socialist.

Question time brought Paul Flynn, MP for Newport West to his feet. In a *Daniel in the Lions' Den* performance he defended the man who, barring a political earthquake, is destined to become MP for Newport East on 1 May.

"If I had been asked to name MPs who commanded most respect, I would have named

Alan Howarth. I've been stirred by Arthur on several occasions but when you look back at the destruction of a great industry and a great union, the union must shoulder some of the responsibility," Mr Flynn said.

There were growls of dissent when he affirmed: "A Labour government is infinitely better than any Tory government."

Bitter words flew across a floor more accustomed to dancing than political invective. Declaring he would switch to the SLP, John Cooksey, a GMB

union convenor sacked recently by the local council, asked loudly: "How did we manage to get Howarth?"

The answer, as Mr Flynn pointed out later, was that the Stratford-Upon-Avon MP woo selection on the first ballot in a one-member one-vote contest conducted under the sort of security which makes new Labour seem as fireproof as Fort Knox.

The inauguration of Mr Scargill as one of the SLP's 60 or so standard bearers on 1 May produced a handful - perhaps a dozen - new recruits, and a parade of left-wing newspaper-sellers.

MEDIA WATCH

Right-wing press damns Tory manifesto with faint praise

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The lesser columns and commentaries of the Tory press reacted with faint praise and considerable criticism to the Tory manifesto yesterday.

Criticism centred on the honesty of the Conservative Party tax proposals and its plans for Europe. More than one identified Chancellor Kenneth Clarke as the source of all that was wrong with the document.

The *Daily Mail* - said to be equivocating in its support for the party - reacted at first with praise for the big theme of the manifesto. The plan to give tax breaks to married couples who care for children or parents. This fits the *Mail's* family-values agenda and was hailed as "Major backs *Mal* campaign for the

family," on Wednesday's front page. However, by yesterday the *Mail's* right-wing commentator, Simon Heffer, was doubtful the tax breaks for married couples was, he said, "hardly boldness or radicalism: it is a belated recognition of what Tories are supposed to have believed in since Disraeli's day."

Heffer even tapped into Tony Blair's theme of broken Tory promises, reminding readers that Major is now haunted by promises he broke on taxation after the 1992 election.

1992 was also raised in the Tory-supporting *Express*: "Those who slaved to produce yesterday's document can be pleased with their work. Unfortunately, the tax betrayal threatens to make it count for nothing."

The *Mail's* sister paper in London, the *Evening Standard*,

is usually a Tory ally but yesterday devoted a whole page to a leader column warning that the Conservatives' "under-investment" in London and its transport system should bring shame to the party.

The *Times'* high-Tory commentator, Lord Rees-Mogg, was scathing on the subject of Europe. "There will be honest, old-fashioned democratic Conservatives who, if they reach page 49, will be so sickened by the hypocrisy of that paragraph [on the supremacy of Parliament] that they will be tempted to go and vote for the Referendum Party."

Lord Rees-Mogg, in common with the *Daily Telegraph*, identified the hand of Kenneth Clarke in the parts of the manifesto he did not like. Mogg claimed that Mr Clarke wasn't

even a Conservative. The *Telegraph* complained that the election would be much simpler if only the Tories would declare their opposition to a single currency, but was still was the most positive of the Tory papers in its overall support. "The ups and downs of the past five years have left the Tories with a clearer sense of purpose," its leader said.

The hand the Tory press would like to see running the party is as over one of Iron. The second half of the *Daily Mail's* leader column on Wednesday was turned over to the "political colossus" who towers over the election.

The implication seems to be that there would little criticism of the manifesto if Margaret Thatcher had not been "oust-ed in the Tory polish of 1990."

AROUND THE REGIONS

Educated decisions over tactics

Bristol's four seats are shared equally between Conservative and Labour at the moment. But boundary changes have given Bristol North West, held by Tory MP Michael Stern, to Labour, leaving at attention on Bristol West, seat of William Widdowson, Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

He commands an abnormally large majority of 16 per cent, but the seat has a reputation for tactical voting and will be an intriguing test case. The Liberal Democrats, in second place, are bullish about matching a victory. But they will need a big tactical squeeze on Labour, who claimed a quarter of the votes in 1992.

The seat has the honour of being dubbed the most intelligent in Britain: it includes the university, with 11,000 students, and boasts more voters with degrees than anywhere else.

The area also has some Labour supporters prepared to vote tactically. Valerie Shepherd, 52, a teacher who lives in

the middle-class suburb of Henleaze, said: "The bottom line is to get the Tories out. I used to be a staunch Labour supporter but I think the Liberal Democrats provide the best alternative."

Jessica Slater, 21, a student at Cambridge, is voting in her home constituency because she believes it is in Bristol West where her vote will count most. "I wanted to vote against the Tories and have decided to vote for the Liberal Democrats. If I had been voting in a constituency where Labour had most chance of winning the seat, then I would have voted for them."

The Liberal Democrat can-

didate is seasoned campaigner Charles Boney, a 46-year-old teacher who has been a city councillor for 17 years. But Labour are fielding a strong candidate too - Valerie Davey, who used to be Labour leader on the now defunct Avon county council. With Labour rampant not just in national opinion polls but in local elections in the constituency, the party threatens to overtake the Liberal Democrats and split the opposition vote.

The tactical argument does not convince all the voters. Julie Lee, 43, from St Andrew's, is switching from the Liberal Democrats to Labour. "I don't have a lot of time for politics, but

I just have a gut feeling that Labour have a strong chance of winning the seat," she said.

Mr Widdowson has been helped by boundary changes: his seat now takes in middle-class Westbury-on-Trym, a rich vein of Tory support. But these extra 4,000 voters might be cancelled out to some extent by a larger-than-usual student vote. His greatest hope must be for his two main opponents to knock each other out and leave him to take the spoils.

The contest in Bristol's other seats is dull by comparison. Bristol East, most of which was Tony Benn's seat from 1950 until 1983, is still technically a marginal but safe this time round for Jean Corston. It typifies "middle England", with suburbs full of skilled working class owner-occupiers who were wooed in the Eighties by Margaret Thatcher's economic policies. But politics has moved on.

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King Kohl set to follow the Iron Chancellor

Tony Barber
Europe Editor

Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany delighted his supporters and wrong-footed his critics yesterday by disclosing on his 67th birthday that he intended to stand for re-election next year. "I believe the current situation requires that I do this," Mr Kohl said in a German television interview taped during his annual Easter slimming holiday in Austria.

His announcement suggests he may nourish hopes of becoming the longest-serving chancellor in German history, by breaking the record of 19 years and two months set by Bismarck 1871 from to 1890. To surpass that, Mr Kohl, who came to power in October 1982, would need to remain chancellor until December 2001.

He said he felt obliged to play a role in a momentous period for Germany that would include Nato's eastward expansion, further integration of the European Union and the launch of a single currency. EU officials

privately applauded his announcement, saying his continued presence at the helm guaranteed Germany would remain the rock upon which monetary union would be built.

Mr Kohl is signalling he will pull out all the stops to ensure Germany qualifies for monetary union without fudging the Maastricht criteria. If Germany records a 1997 budget deficit significantly higher than the Maastricht limit of 3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, there is a serious risk the single currency would be delayed or never get off the ground.

With 4.7 million Germans unemployed, more than at any time since Hitler's assumption of power in 1933, economists are warning that Mr Kohl's government will have its work cut out to meet the target. However, by means of a mixture of spending cuts, tax incentives and social-welfare reforms, Mr Kohl aims to do exactly that.

One reason for his determination is that a higher deficit would probably strengthen the case of southern European

countries to be part of the first wave of monetary union.

Mr Kohl suspects that if Italy, Spain and Portugal were all included in the first wave, German public opinion might revolt against the project on grounds that the euro would be weaker than the Mark.

A second reason is that German failure to fulfil the Maastricht criteria might tempt Mr Kohl's Social Democrat (SPD) opponents into campaigning openly for a delay to the single currency. One potential SPD challenger to Mr Kohl next year, Gerhard Schröder, makes little secret that he thinks postponement may be better than sticking to the EU's scheduled launch date of January 1999.

While surveys show scepticism among voters about giving up the Mark for the euro, Mr Kohl has long been convinced that, if he leads from the front, he can turn opinion around. He attaches such importance to making a success out of political and economic union that he has suggested the alternative facing Europe next century



History man: Helmut Kohl, who, if he becomes chancellor for yet another term, will exceed the record set by Otto von Bismarck

might be uncontrollable nationalism and war. Mr Kohl's most loyal Christian Democrat (CDU) supporters believe that, despite a recent slump in poll ratings, he will be the best candidate to lead the party to a fifth

successive election victory. Yet his coalition government was rocked earlier this year by public factional disputes and by signs that younger CDU politicians were beginning to position themselves for a post-Kohl era.

Wolfgang Schäuble, the CDU parliamentary leader and one of the Chancellor's closest political companions, took back party stalwarts when he told an interviewer he wanted to succeed Mr Kohl. The wheel-

chair-bound Mr Schäuble, who was shot by a mentally deranged person in 1990, responded to the question of whether a cripple could govern Germany with no emphatic "yes". However, after Mr Kohl's

announcement yesterday, Mr Schäuble was quick to rally behind his leader. "Germany needs a chancellor with authority and the ability to get things done. This is a good decision for Germany," he said.

Legal scandal could prompt early French election

John Lichfield
Paris

At first it was just idle political chatter, "between coffee and croissant" as *Le Monde* put it. But the possibility of an early French general election has now lodged firmly on the political radar screens of the leading parties and on the front pages of the newspapers.

The gossip in the corridors of the National Assembly is that President Jacques Chirac may dissolve parliament next month

and call an election in early June – nine months earlier than the constitution demands.

The chatter became so insistent this week that the Prime Minister's parliamentary adviser, Eric Woerth, strode up to a group of government deputies on Wednesday and told them to shut their mouths about early elections in public. "This is not a good debate," he said.

According to the office of the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, it is a rumour which has no "objective" basis. There has been

no "reflection" on the topic whatsoever. And yet ministers who have spoken to Mr Juppé in recent days tell the press that the possibility is in his mind.

It is Mr Chirac who is, according to *Le Monde*, the main stumbling block to an early election. Mr Juppé is said to be broadly in favour. But that was before new opinion polls yesterday showed a new downturn in the popularity of both men, which had been recovering steadily since the New Year. The arguments for an early

poll are six-fold. An election next Spring would fall in the middle of the final approach to decisions on the European single currency. If there is a vicious Euro-battle about whether France qualifies, and on what terms, it could split the centre-right parties of the present majority in mid-campaign. Secondly, the economy is looking slightly better but is unlikely to improve dramatically this year. Thirdly, the majority parties are in good shape to fight an early election, but the opposition parties are

not. A snap poll could de-fail the Socialists, who are struggling to put together a coherent programme, and the far-right National Front, which lacks the resources to change gears for an early campaign.

Fourthly, several recent studies suggest that the centre-right would win a majority if elections were held in the next few weeks. Fifthly, a new centre-right five-year mandate in parliament from this June would coincide exactly with the remainder of President Chirac's presidential

term, giving new impetus to carry out his economic and institutional reforms. Sixthly, but by no means least importantly, the legal oet is beginning to close around senior government figures suspected of involvement in illegal party funding.

Against these persuasive arguments, President Chirac is said to have two main objections. The opinion poll evidence is not conclusive; early elections would be a great risk. Secondly, snap elections for tactical reasons are disliked by

French voters. Of all the arguments in favour, those which might most easily overcome the President's scruples are the legal ones. The newspaper *Le Parisien* yesterday published new evidence linking two senior ministers – Jean Arthuis (finance) and Jacques Barrot (employment) – to a Swiss bank account controlling illegal funding by big business of the small centrist party, the Social Democrats, in the 1980s and early 1990s. *Le Canard Enchaîné* has already said that the two

men will shortly be placed under formal investigation. *Le Parisien* said yesterday that this will happen before the summer.

With several senior figures in their own RPR (neo-Gaullist party facing similar problems such a development would be deeply embarrassing for hot President Chirac and Mr Juppé. A new mandate from an early poll would help them to glide over the problems and give a opportunity to create a new government team without the legally-challenged ministers.

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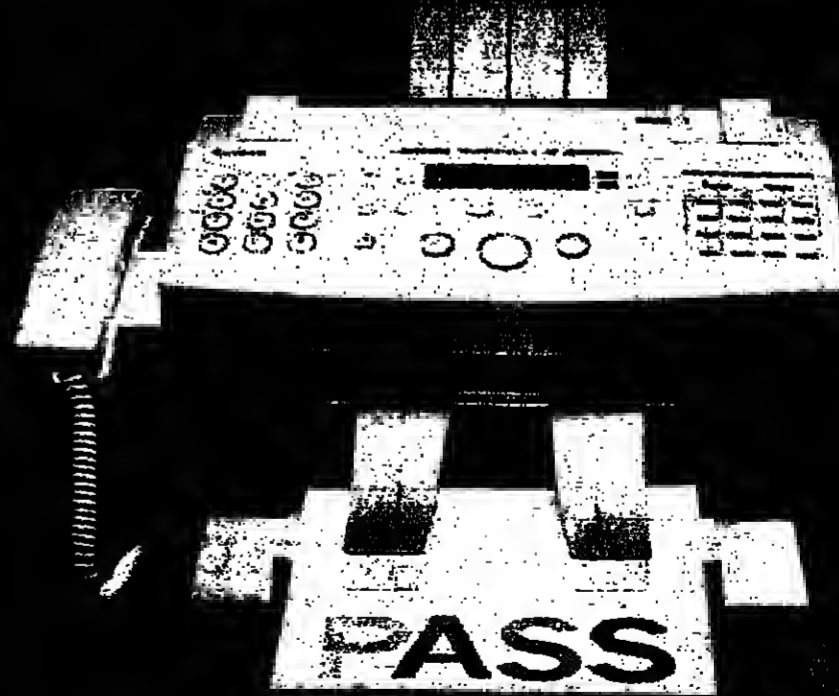
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Pentagon sees US as supreme until 2010

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

No new superpower is likely to pose a military challenge to the US before 2010, in spite of China's booming economy and its implications for China's military potential.

That is the conclusion of a draft report prepared as part of the Pentagon's four-yearly review of global strategy and security. But, it says, the US must remain ready to fight two major regional wars - like the Gulf war - "in close succession", if not at exactly the same time.

The report, part of the Quadrennial Defense Review, predicts there will be a "period of strategic pause" between now and about 2010. "Despite China's potential, no superpower is likely to challenge us for at least a decade. That will be a breather but we'll still be in a major financial crunch", said a Pentagon official.

The Pentagon clearly does not see the European Union, with its 370 million people as a potentially hostile superpower, although the State Department regards it rather differently. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the worsening of Russia's internal problems, the US has been the world's only "superpower". The Pentagon report assumes that Russia, with one-eighth of the Earth's land surface but only 150 million people will not regain its former status, that the states of the former Soviet Union will not coalesce again, and that neither China with its

vast population of 1,200 million, nor India, with 935 million, will increase in strength and technological capacity to challenge the US, with its population of 260 million.

The final version of the review was due to be submitted to Congress by mid-May, but will now be delayed. A Pentagon official said the final version would be written personally by the Defense Secretary, William Cohen, and was expected to remain large US forces in Europe and Asia and the current policy of planning for two major regional conflicts, though "in close succession", rather than simultaneously.

The Pentagon wants to retain the two-major-conflict criterion, even though it is more likely to be involved in a number of peacekeeping operations. The US military wants to be able to undertake these as well as major regional conflicts.

Pentagon officials said they had not finalised their conclusions about how US forces should be reshaped to fit the new world order, although defence officials said the policy of maintaining about 100,000 US troops in Europe and the Pacific had not been challenged by the report.

The Department of Defense anticipates future budgets averaging \$250bn (£156bn). Unless it finds savings on the cost of troops and bases it will be hard-pressed to pay for new projects, including the F-22 fighter and other top-of-the-range weaponry.



Joy Adamson with Elsa, subject of the Hollywood movie *Born Free*. The scriptwriter, Lester Cole, died before he could see his name on the titles

Hollywood writers finally get the credit

Tim Cornwell
Los Angeles

Fifty years after Hollywood was torn apart by post-war red scares, the Writers Guild of America has voted to change the credits on 24 films to reflect the real names of their black-listed writers.

The major studios, who in many cases tacitly went along with the McCarthyite witch-hunts, will be asked to restore the names of ten writers on the films, made between 1952 and 1971, from *Born Free* to *Inherit the Wind*. One of the few sur-

living writers, Bernard Gordon, 78, thanked the Guild for "correcting the record and giving credit where it is long overdue".

But he also said the action came four decades too late to help his Hollywood career. Among the films Mr. Gordon wrote was *Hellicat of the Navy*, a 1957 comedy which was the only film in which Ronald Reagan and his future wife Nancy Davis appeared together. Mr. Gordon's name will now be added to that of a second writer on the film, David Lang.

"I am sure angry at the way I was treated by all the major

studios," Mr. Gordon told the *New York Times*. "They black-listed me, and I couldn't get any work in this damn town."

He later built a successful career in Europe. A prolific writer, he will get new credits on seven films. The Guild, with 7,500 members on the west coast, acts as the official arbiter of writing credits.

They may go unnoticed by audiences, but are the lifeblood of scriptwriters, who often complain of being at the bottom of the Hollywood food chain, their work butchered by producers and petulant actors.

A credit meant a guarantee of more work, and a rise in salary, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, when writers were more firmly under the studios' thumb than they are today. Pay rates would be directly linked to the number of credits a screenwriter had under his belt.

The guild's executive director, Brian Walton, said it was moving to correct these "sad and unfortunate actions of the past".

The films run from *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, in 1952, to *Custer of the West*, *Earth*

vs *the Flying Saucers*, and *The Robe*. The oaths came much too late, however, for writer Lester Cole.

In 1966, he adapted Joy Adamson's book of her life with African lions for the film *Born Free*, but under the pseudonym Gerald L.C. Copley. While the film was hardly an artistic gem, its irresistible animal footage made it a huge commercial success. Mr. Cole, one of the celebrated "Hollywood Ten", died in 1983, aged 81.

Writer or co-writer on 40 screenplays, he was a founder

of the Writers Guild, but also a lifelong socialist who joined the Communist Party in 1934. Before the Second World War he worked on 24 films.

But when he refused to name names before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947, he was fined and eventually imprisoned, with his career destroyed.

Unbowed, he ended his 1982 auto-biography, *Hollywood Red*, with a quotation from Friedrich Engels: "Until there is world socialism, man remains in a stage of his prehistory."

Panic among immigrants over US law

It was supposed to bring clarity and order to a murky outside of American life. Instead, the new US immigration laws which took effect this week have brought a string of lawsuits, confusion and panic in many foreign immigrant communities, and the prospect of genuine chaos in six months time, if matters are left as they are.

The intentions of the law which President Bill Clinton signed before the November election are plain enough - to curb the number of legal immigrants, prevent abuse of the political asylum grounds for entry into the country, and above all to impose the toughest clamp-down in decades on an illegal immigration reckoned to be running at almost 300,000 a year.

Some 60,000 to 70,000 illegal immigrants are caught and deported each year by the authorities, but under the new laws that

Regulations introduced this week fail to tackle the country's schizophrenic attitude towards illegal communities, writes Rupert Cornwell in Washington

total should rise considerably. Henceforth, anyone whose visa is found to have expired must return home to apply for a new one, while those who have overstayed by more than six months will be barred from returning for between 3 and 10 years.

In addition, some 1,500 more border guards have been taken on by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), in a probably vain attempt to staunch the flow of immigrants who slip into the US without papers - mainly across the southern border with Mexico, but also from Caribbean countries like Haiti, or crammed in a boat bound from China or south-east Asia.

But almost every provision of the measure has caused at least

as many problems as it solves. Civil rights lawyers and immigrants' rights groups have gone to court to challenge the new powers of officials to interview asylum-seekers at the border and to summarily turn them back if they are unsatisfied the

claim is genuine. "On the basis of a snap judgement, people may be sent home, possibly to face torture or death," Robert Rubin, a civil rights lawyer told a Washington judge this week, in a vain effort to delay implementation of the law.

She said the Justice Department would vigorously defend the law against court challenges, including one by immigrant advocates over the procedures affecting asylum

seekers at the border.

"What we want to try to do is to make sure that it is enforced fairly. We are committed to enforcing the law, but to ensuring that it is done so in a just and humane manner," she said. "Our overwhelming efforts will be to focus on those individuals illegally in this country who have engaged in criminal activity," she added.

For most, however, of the estimated 5 million illegal immigrants here - some 2 million of them on overstayed visas - the real fear is of losing their livelihood and of being deported. In the belief that they would be sent home if they did not submit applications for residence by 1 April, thousands queued up at INS offices in the days before the supposed deadline.

In fact the real cut-off date may only come in six months, with closure of the so-called "pay-to-stay" loophole that allows illegal immigrants to pay a \$1,000 (£625) fine and stay in the US while their residence applications are being processed. This can take years. But unless Congress votes an extension, "pay-to-stay" will stop on 30

September, raising, in theory at least, the spectre of round-ups and mass deportations.

Almost certainly, however, it will not come to that. Mr. Clinton accepted the Republican-driven measure to shore up his support in the political centre, and especially in the four electoral college "mega-states" of Texas, California, Florida and New York, where more than half all immigrants, legal and illegal, live. But without them, whole sectors of the local economy would founder.

At the 1996 Republican Convention in San Diego, speaker after speaker rattled off a xenophobic anti-immigrant litany, railing against overwhelmed schools and welfare services, and cut-price labour. But a quick check revealed that many of the cleaners and menial workers who kept the convention running were ... illegal immigrants.

THE World of Lily Wong LARRY FEGN © 1997

4 April 1997

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Raincoat firm gives up on US production

New York - Can the industrial nations of the West fight back against competition from low-wage workers in the developing world? The evidence from the once-mighty US apparel industry in the last few days is that it is fighting a losing battle, writes David Osborne.

The raincoat manufacturer London Fog, a household name in the US, has said it is to close its last remaining US factory. The plant, which employs 280 workers in Baltimore, represented a unique experiment to withstand the logic of shifting production to countries where wage costs are lower. The Baltimore government agreed two years ago to give

London Fog almost \$2m in incentives as a reward for keeping the factory open, and the main union agreed to a \$1.25 cut in hourly wages. Now the company concedes that even with that help, making coats in the US is no longer a viable option.

In the political debate about the benefits and costs to American industry of global free trade, textile workers have long been identified as the group most wounded by the process. In the primary races of the 1996 presidential elections, Republican contender Patrick Buchanan singled out the earlier closures by London Fog to support his platform in favour of reasserting trade controls.

FANTASY POLITICS



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Reuters - London

Thai killed by peacock

Vichai Thongto, who lived near Bangkok, was killed by his pet peacock. Mr Thongto, 30, was feeding the family's four caged peacocks when the sole male, "Young Thong" - Golden Peacock - clawed at his head. A scan showed a blood clot on Mr Thongto's brain; he died on Monday. His father, Somchai, said he still loved Young Thong.

AP - Bangkok

Unrest: Police patrolling Port Moresby during riots last month over the use of Sandline International to assist in putting down the Bougainville rebels Photograph: Reuters

Sandline International provided training and military assistance to the PNG government against the Bougainville rebels until a military revolt led to the suspension of the contract and the arrest of its chief executive, Tim Spicer. Businesses linked to Sandline had previously discussed the reopening and the financing of a copper

Australian mining giant RTZ-CRA was forced in May 1989 to close the Panguna copper mine in central Bougainville, an island 500 miles north-east of the Papuan capital, Port Moresby, after rebels staged a series of sabotage attacks. Panguna, operated by RTZ-CRA's

the mine about 1945 so that they would control the equity and then get responsible groups involved in the development of the mine."

Mr Buckingham is known for his extensive mineral and energy interests in Angola and Sierra Leone where he introduced Executive Outcomes, the world's largest private army, to the governments of Sierra

He insists that as a businessman his primary aim is to ensure satisfactory conditions for stability, which include ensuring that the government and population of the area where his interests lie are considered.

Mr. Buchanan also maintains that he has no corporate link with Mr. Spicer's company, although he advised and assisted Mr. Spicer with his negotiations. "The point is that PNC holds a major asset which no one is benefiting from, least of all the people of Bougainville. Sandline's role was to deal with the security elements, our role in conjunction with other parties was to deal with the political elements."

An inquiry into the affair in PNG heard yesterday that the deal was proposed in a letter dated 1 August 1996. It suggested a "joint venture with your government, ourselves and RTZ-CRA to reopen and upgrade the Bougainville mine once recovered", said Ian Molloy, counsel assisting the inquiry.

*Applies to kitchen purchases only when you spend \$1,000 or more on cabinets.

Describing human rights abuses in the Russian-Chechen war, which broke out in December 1994, Amnesty noted the use of electric shock, hostage-taking and rape as a form of punishment against villagers suspected of supporting the Chechen rebels. It documented cases of torture and ill-treatment by both sides.

[illegible]

Zairean rebels say no to PM's job offers

Kinshasa (Reuters) — Zaire's new Prime Minister, Etienne Tshisekedi, unveiled a government yesterday with no representatives of veteran President Mobutu Sese Seko, and earmarked six ministries for Laurent Kabila's rebels.

Mr Tshisekedi, who announced details of the 26-member government at a news conference, said the portfolios of foreign affairs, defence, budget, planning, foreign trade and agriculture were reserved for the rebel alliance.

However, Raphael Ngehenda, information commissioner for the rebels, speaking shortly before leaving Goma for talks in South Africa, said that the rebels would not accept the posts.

Mr Tshisekedi, who has never accepted his 1993 sacking from the post by Mr Mobutu, also announced the dissolution of Zaire's transitional parliament and the revival of the sovereign national conference that launched Zaire's democratic transition. It was not immediately clear whether he had the authority to do this.

The national conference dissolved itself in December 1992 to make way for a High Council of the Republic, which in turn evolved into the transitional parliament in 1994.

The transitional parliament nominated Mr Tshisekedi on Tuesday after Kengo wa Dondo, who was appointed in 1994 and had strongly backed the military option in the war, resigned.

Mr Mobutu ratified the appointment of Mr Tshisekedi, a veteran opponent who has called for talks with the rebels.



President Mobutu Sese Seko K Ngbendu Ngbendu Bwembwe in 1993

from early in the conflict, on Wednesday.

Mr Tshisekedi's government is essentially the same as the one that led when Mr Mobutu sacked him. That government included no members of Mr Mobutu's Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR), who held a majority in the transitional parliament. Mr Tshisekedi was originally appointed by the national conference in 1991.

Mr Mobutu, who has cancer, has seen his grip on the country weakened by rebel advances. The rebels took up arms in October in a dispute over Zairean nationality for ethnic Tutsis. They say Mr Mobutu must stand down.

Representatives of the rebels and Zaire's divided political family are due to meet in South Africa this week for peace talks.

Though the Union flag still flies, Argentina nurses Falkland hopes

Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

Directly opposite a square once known as the Plaza de los Ingleses (the English) and a clock tower modelled after Big Ben, Argentines commemorated the start of the Falklands war 15 years ago this week. Many expressed hope that, with a potential Labour government in Britain, Argentina's war goal might eventually be met, this time through diplomacy.

On Wednesday, the anniversary of the Argentine invasion of the islands, soldiers in Napoleonic uniforms marched in front of an eternal flame and a stone monument listing the names of more than 600 Argentinian war dead. Relatives and war veterans laid wreaths and sang old folk songs.

The overall sentiment was clear that most Argentines regret the 2 April 1982 invasion — led by the then leader of the military junta, General Leopoldo Galtieri — but do not forget the victims and still firmly believe Las Malvinas (The Falklands) are theirs.

The commemorative ceremony went on long into the night despite a major rival event — a televised World Cup football qualifying match in which Argentina lost to Bolivia.

On the disputed islands themselves, an Argentine cemetery over the site of major battles at Goose Green, there was no one to remember the 234 Argentinians who died there. The graves, mostly marked only with the words "Soldado" (Soldier) or "an Argentine soldier known only unto God," are well tended by the Falkland Islanders but no "keeper" (islander) was ever going to show up on the anniversary of the invasion.

In an open letter to the nation, Argentina's current army commander General Martin Balza, a veteran of the war, recalled "the cold, permanent drizzle, the bombings and grey skies". He wrote of a comrade who died beside him in the trenches and his feelings when Argentina surrendered on 14 June 1982.



"A lot of our comrades-in-arms embraced each other. We cried with pain, shame, anger and sadness. Then came the silence of our return to the

mainland of which I would rather not speak."

Altogether, 652 Argentinians perished in the conflict, with 255 dead on the British side. General Galtieri was ousted in disgrace three days after the surrender.

Argentine veterans feel they were treated much like Ameri-

Royal Marine commandos raise the Union flag in the Falklands on 24 May 1982 after British troops established a bridgehead; the following day at least 24 men died when *Atlantic Conveyor*, a ship taking supplies to the bridgehead, and HMS *Conventry* were hit.

Photograph: PO Peter Holgate

can GIs who returned from the Vietnam war. Many are still jobless, some do not receive full pensions. Others walk the platforms of Buenos Aires railway stations in tattered fatigues, selling stickers or calendars saying: "Las Malvinas son Argentinas" (The Falklands are Argentinas).

In a radio speech, Richard Ralph, the Governor of the Falkland Islands, called it "that day of infamy 15 years ago. Fences are slowly being mended but can only be fully mended when the (Argentine) claim to sovereignty is dropped."

Argentine newspapers were full of remarks by a Labour spokesman saying that his party's policy on the Falklands was identical to that of the Conservatives: that Britain has sovereignty and only the islanders themselves can change that.

But some commentators said the government of Carlos Menem hoped for more flexibility from Labour, such as in direct transport between Argentina and the islands and visiting permits for Argentine passport holders. At present, only Argentinians with passports from third countries can visit the islands and all flights leave from Chile.

After a meeting with British officials at Chevening in January, the Argentine Foreign Minister, Guido di Tella, told an interviewer: "I have said to [the shadow Foreign Secretary] Robin Cook, with whom I have had various meetings in the past, that I was not going to trouble them during the election campaign because we are going to be careful."

"But I said he could rest assured that within 60 to 90 days of a Labour government taking office, I would be knocking on the door, asking for a meeting."

Israel stays firm on settlers

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

As Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, prepares to see President Bill Clinton in Washington to give Israel's views on a new United States peace initiative, Israel says it will not stop building settlements at Har Homa in Jerusalem or elsewhere.

At the same time Israel has dropped its demand to extradite Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook, the political head of Hamas, the Islamic militant movement, who has been held in a US prison for 18 months. The extradition request was dropped for reasons "relating to security and the prevention of terrorism" said an Israeli official.

The decision not to extradite Mr Marzook, who may now go to Jordan, shows that Israel is wary of provoking Hamas, despite its demand that Yasser Arafat put its leaders in jail. In October 1995 Israel made a 900-page long extradition demand charging Mr Marzook with involvement in "murder, conspiracy and other crimes". The Palestinian leader had asked that Mr Marzook not be sent to Israel.

It is unclear if Mr Netanyahu will come under pressure from the US to freeze settlements in order to get negotiations started. The Israeli prime minister ignored two letters from Mr Clinton asking him not to build at Har Homa, but even so the US vetoed two UN Security Council resolutions condemning the Har Homa settlement.

In New York James Baker, the former US Secretary of State, criticised the US veto saying: "I am disappointed that my government saw fit to veto the Security Council resolution after standing up and saying it opposed settlement activity."

Israel is asking for a crackdown, which means mass arrests and detention without trial by the Palestinian Authority, on Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The authority is reported to have arrested 125 Jihad members.

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What's included

The offer includes a 48 hour return car crossing with P&O European Ferries to Calais and one night sharing a twin/double room with shower (or bath) and continental breakfast. All prices are per person based on two or four people sharing a car. For a supplement you

can upgrade your accommodation. The maximum stay abroad is two nights, the extra night price is indicated next to each hotel (maximum stay abroad 48 hours). For details of Le Shuttle see below. Simply refer to the price chart to see which category your chosen hotel falls into.

Crossing the Channel

Prices include up to, and/or 48 hour return travel on P&O European Ferries. If you wish to travel out or back with P&O European Ferries on 1-6 May or 23-31 May please add £30 per car. If you wish to travel Le Shuttle from Folkestone add £25 per car for bookings between April and June. Between July and August the price for P&O European Ferries and Le Shuttle is the same. P&O European Ferries from Dover and Le Shuttle depart regularly. Please indicate on the booking form your approx. preferred hours of departure/return. Driveline will try to book you within two hours of your requested time. You must check in at least 40 minutes prior to the time indicated on your tickets. (Le Shuttle are not currently operating a turn up and go service).

How to Book

There is no need to collect tokens, simply complete the booking form above giving a first and second choice of departure date and hotel. Please make sure your first and second choice of hotel are from the same price category. The first date for travel is 18th April. Dates shown as not available are given as guidelines only and subject to change. Bookings must be received at least seven working days prior to your first requested date of departure. Bookings will not be accepted by telephone. Travel insurance is available at the special price of £10 pp. Details of the cover are available from Driveline Europe Ltd in advance on request by calling 01707 880011. No refunds on insurance. All bookings will be verified by confirmation invoice and tickets are normally issued five days prior to departure. A binding contract between you and Driveline Europe Ltd will come into existence when Driveline despatch a confirmation invoice.

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All bookings are on request subject to availability. You must travel out and back with the same carrier. The offer is available to residents aged 18 years or over. You will require a valid EU passport and any necessary visas. The offer applies to cars up to 6.5m long only. This offer cannot be combined with any other offer. Some hotels charge tourist tax locally (approx. FRS pp per day). Most hypermarkets and supermarkets are closed on Sundays. Not all hotels have restaurants. Parking, where available may be extra. Readers should be aware that no changes, amendments, refunds or cancellations are permitted with this offer, in accordance with the Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations (1992). Driveline Europe Ltd operates a Client's Trust account whereby all monies paid to them by clients are held in a separate bank account until the contract has been fully performed i.e. the return date as confirmed by Driveline Europe has passed. No cheque for departures within 14 days.



Hotel Clerly, Hesdin l'Abbe

Hotels

Hesdin l'Abbe: A tiny hamlet just 5 minutes from Boulogne.

Hotel Clerly*** Experience serenity, intimacy and comfort in this charming 18th century hotel which sits amid acres of landscaped and unspoilt gardens. Add £13pp per night for room with a bath. Category B. Extra night £23pp. Limited availability at weekends (Fri/Sat).

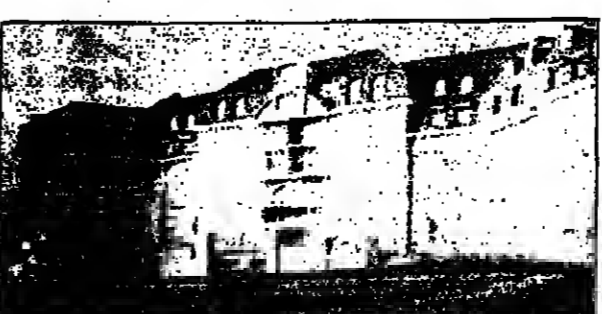
Le Touquet Surrounded by forests, an elegant coastal resort offering an abundance of fine restaurants, shops, cafes and two golf courses.

Hotel Park Plaza**** A luxury hotel located close to the sea and Le Canche estuary, with indoor pool, restaurant and bar. Category C. Extra night £42pp. Not available: 25-27/4, 16/17/5, 2/23-30/6, 1-4, 10-13/7, 25-28/8.

Calais An historic town with busy port and colourful market.

Hotel Maurice**** A favourite for many regulars to Calais. This charming family run hotel is furnished throughout with antiques. Excellent Cuisine. Add £8 per night for room with bath. Category A. Extra night £26pp. Limited availability 9-11, 20-23/6, 5/12/15/7, 1/19/21-25/8. Finest Calais** A modern central hotel offering good value for money. Category A. Extra night £21pp. Not available: 30/4, 1/2/5, 5/7/10/12/8.

Arras (approx. 75 miles from Calais) A beautiful city with cobbled quarters cathedral and colourful markets. Hotel de l'Univers**** A former 16th century monastery with gourmet restaurant and private garden. Category B. Extra night £28pp. Not available: 19/25/4, 22/23/30/5, 1-4/10-14/6, 25/26/7.



Hotel Park Plaza, Le Touquet

Prices per person	18/4 - 30/6/97* (Mid Season)			1/7 - 31/8/97 (High Season) #		
	Car & 4	Car & 3	Car & 2	Car & 4	Car & 3	Car & 2
CATEGORY A	£39	£42	£45	£49	£54	£59
CATEGORY B	£49	£52	£55	£59	£64	£69
CATEGORY C	£59	£62	£65	£69	£74	£79

*For travel via Le Shuttle during mid season (April - June) add £25 per car - book holidays/leisure travel. #For outward or return travel via P&O European Ferries 1-6 & 23-31/5 add £30 per car. #For travel via Le Shuttle, add £25 per car. For outward or return travel via a 6th/5th day during High Season (July - August) add £10 per car. For travel out and back on the same day add £10 per car.

For single room supplement (pp per night) use extra night price. The car & 3 price refers to three adults sharing a room. One child sharing the parents room is £15 per night (breakfast extra). For details and prices of hotels with family rooms for 2 adults and 2 children call Driveline Europe.

THE INDEPENDENT SHORT BREAK BOOKING FORM

Party Leader Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Tel (day) _____ (eve) _____
Total no. of adults (inc. driver) _____ Children (2-11 yrs) _____ Infants (under 2 yrs) _____
I wish to travel via (please tick) Ferry ☐ Le Shuttle ☐
Outward date (1st choice): _____ Return date: _____
Outward date (2nd choice): _____ Return date: _____
Approx hour of departure: _____ Hour of return: _____
Hotel (1st choice) _____ Hotel (2nd choice) _____
No. of people ☐ No. of rooms ☐ No. of nights ☐ Room type _____
Car reg. _____ Make _____ Year _____ Height if over 1.65m _____
Payment
1 Night Break (see price box) @ £ _____ pp = £ _____
Additional night @ £ _____ pp = £ _____
Child sharing with parents @ £15 each = £ _____
Ferry/Le Shuttle supplements = £ _____
Personal insurance @ £ _____ pp = £ _____
TOTAL = £ _____
Payment: I confirm that I am over 18 years of age and have read, understood and accept on behalf of all members of my party, the terms and conditions given and have completed the credit card box for value shown. _____ Date _____
Please charge the total to my Switch/Debit/Connect/Mastercard/Visa card account no. _____
Issue No. (Switch only) _____ Start date / / Expiry date / /
Signature _____
Card holder's name (as on card) _____
Address if different from above _____
Send to: Driveline Europe, Greenleaf House, Darlings Lane, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 1AE. If you prefer not to receive further details of offers please tick this box ☐

obituaries / gazette

The Rev Dr John Kelly

John Kelly was associated with St Edmund Hall, Oxford, for 62 years, for almost half of which he was its principal. He oversaw much of the long process by which it was transformed from academic hall into incorporated college. At the same time, his contributions to biblical and patristic studies won him international scholarly recognition.

Born in 1909, he was one of five children of John and Ann Davidson Kelly; he was educated privately in a small school owned by his father at Bridge of Allan, near Stirling. His commercial misfortunes left family circumstances somewhat strained. Kelly therefore developed what became a lasting quality of self-reliance.

At 16, he went to Glasgow University. After he secured first class honours in Classics, a Ferguson scholarship took him to Queen's College, Oxford, where he not only won further first class degrees in Mods, Greats and Theology, but also was president of the Junior Common Room. At Queen's, the distinguished liturgical scholar E. C. Ratcliff was a profound influence. Kelly moved from Presbyterianism to the Church of England. Ministerial study at St Stephen's House led to ordination. After a brief curacy in Northampton, A.B. Emden in 1935 invited him to be chaplain of St Edmund Hall. Two years later, he became Emden's vice-principal.

Kelly's vice-principal role carried a formidable teaching burden in Theology and PPE, but in the middle years of the Second World War, when Emden commanded the University Naval Division, Kelly virtually

ran the hall. This precluded his becoming a services chaplain. Nineteen thirty-seven also marked the beginning of the 20-year process by which the hall secured complete independence from Queen's. Emden wished independence to preserve its ancient aulian status (its origins go back to the 13th century), not to make it the youngest college. As vice-principal, Kelly already appreciated that only collegiate status could meet future needs; while loyal to Emden, he wisely ensured that the way to it remained open.

When ill-health enforced Emden's early retirement in 1951, all concurred in acclaiming Kelly as his obvious successor. In 1958, he received from the Duke of Edinburgh the hall's charter of incorporation. His retirement in 1979 followed his having prepared the way for another major change, in the admission of women to the college. It was a step that he accepted, for he saw that the time had come.

Throughout the 28 years of his principalship, Kelly dedicated himself unstintingly to St Edmund Hall's well-being. Collegiate status and an expanding fellowship did, indeed, lighten administrative burdens. In mid-term he remarked that Emden left the principalship a job and a half, but that he had made it half a job. (He would not, perhaps, have said that by 1979.) Kelly's forte lay in his cultivation of the friendship of the undergraduates. A phenomenal memory for names and faces enabled him at all stages to know and to be known by virtually all of a numerically large student body. Few heads

of colleges have excelled him in this respect.

Himself an outstanding performer on the tennis and squash courts, he was greatly concerned for the sporting life of the hall — partly thereby to win notice for the vitality of a new college, but partly, too, one aspect, in self-compensation for his own lack of schoolboy sporting opportunities and for his being denied war service. But he was also gratified by Aulians' conspicuous successes in the arts and in journalism; for himself, the cinema was a lifelong interest, along with painting (the hall acquired a remarkable collection of modern pictures during his time) and literature. He was fondably well-read.

Kelly's principalship was marked by a major expansion of the hitherto constricted buildings of the hall. The outstanding developments were the building, through the munificence of the Wolfson Foundation, of a new dining hall, and the conversion into an undergraduate library of the neighbouring church of St Peter-in-the-East which had become redundant.

In his use of time, Kelly was ordered and disciplined; he balanced a public image of graciousness and even flamboyance with private austerity and scholarly withdrawal. Hence, his service to St Edmund Hall was punctuated by the regular publication of authoritative books. (Learned articles he disdained, and produced none.) The university lectureship in patristic studies which he held from 1948 until 1976 bore early fruit in his *Early Christian Creeds* (1950), a translation of Rufinus' commentary on the

Apostles' Creed (1955), *Early Christian Doctrines* (1958), and *The Athanasian Creed* (1964). His attention moved towards biblical commentaries, with volumes on St Paul's Pastoral Epistles (1963) and the Epistles of St Peter and St Jude (1969).

The lucidity and judicious balance of Kelly's earlier books have commended them across the theological spectrum. In his commentaries, his support for traditional views about authorship and his expository profundity have been particularly welcomed by the conservatively minded.

In more recent years, Kelly's interest in and keen observation of people directed him to hagiography. Studies of Jerome (1975) and John Chrysostom (*Golden Mouth*, 1985) brought to life two ascetics and preachers of the early Church. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Popes* (1986) provided masterly epitomes of the popes from St Peter to John Paul II and has been translated into several languages. Kelly had subsequently been engaged upon a similar dictionary of the archbishops of Canterbury.

Unlike Emden, Kelly did not play a large part in university, as distinct from college, business. In 1966, the system of rotation by seniority amongst heads of houses brought him the vice-chancellorship, but an untimely attack of jaundice which he contracted in Turkey enforced his almost immediate retirement. Nor did he progress far towards the ecclesiastical promotion for which his learning and abilities might seem to have predestined him. When it was early offered to him, a



Kelly, right, receiving from the Duke of Edinburgh St Edmund Hall's charter of incorporation as a college of Oxford University, June 1958

recognition that he could not easily have worked with the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, confirmed his commitment to the academic world. Under the more congenial Michael Ramsey, he was chairman from 1964 to 1968 of the Archbishop's Commission on Roman Catholic Relations, and in 1966 he accompanied Ramsey on his historic visit to Pope Paul VI. Early friendship with Bishop George Bell resulted in an association with Chichester Cathedral in which he held canonicates from 1948 until 1993. He delighted in the round of cathedral worship.

Kelly's wide circle of friends will remember especially his mastery of the spoken word. He excelled as a lecturer and as a preacher, and no less in conversation at table and as an after-dinner speaker. One such speech at the Oxford Farming Conference which he based upon Virgil's *Bucolics* is a famous example of his ability to adapt his classical scholarship to a wider audience. His voice was distinctive. While at Queen's, he divested himself of a Glaswegian accent and of a severe stammer, but he retained a manner of speaking that lent itself to the mimicry in which un-

dergraduates, in particular, delight. He was most fully himself when he was in their company in the front quadrangle of St Edmund Hall. But to whomever he was speaking, and whether the subject was serious or frivolous, the adjective that best describes Kelly's impact is that it was life-enhancing.

Kelly never married, but no picture of him would be true to life that did not notice the abiding place in his affections of his brothers and sisters, and especially of his nephews and their families. In this sense, he was a family man.

John Cowdrey

John Norman Davidson Kelly: the obituary: born Bridge of Allan 13 April 1909; ordained deacon 1934, priest 1935; Chaplain, St Edmund Hall, Oxford 1935-37, Vice-Principal 1937-51, Principal 1951-79, Honorary Fellow 1979-97, Dean of Degrees 1982-89, Speaker's Lecturer in Biblical Studies, Oxford University 1945-48, Lecturer in Patristic Studies 1948-76; Pro-Vice-Chancellor 1964-66, 1972-79, Vice-Chancellor 1966; Canon, Chichester Cathedral 1949-93; DD Oxon 1951; Chairman, Archbishop's Commission on Roman Catholic Relations 1964-68; FBA 1965; died Oxford 31 March 1997.

Tomoyuki Tanaka



Kiddy kitsch: Tanaka's monster Godzilla eats a train

A shrewd eye for the quick yen is the distinguishing characteristic of the typical Osaka businessman. The highly successful film producer Tomoyuki Tanaka was no exception to this rule. Yet there was much more to the man than financial acumen. In his long life he made over 200 films for the Toho Movie Company, which he entered in 1944, rising to be chairman of the board of directors and chief executive producer.

Among his greatest successes was the fantasy science fiction movie *Godzilla*, made in 1954. At the time, the Japanese cinema had long since passed through its golden period and was in a decline, confronted by the waves of American blockbuster movies. Tanaka showed his daring in dreaming up the figure of a prehistoric monster that was to appear in a dizzying succession of 22 films. The Japanese name was "Gojira" — a conflation of the first syllable of "gorilla" and the last two of "kajira", meaning "whale", and not, as many Westerners think, God himself in SFX form.

This awesome beast, spewing radioactive fire from dinosaur jaws, was the brainchild of the special effects genius Eiji Tsuburaya, who in childhood had been spellbound by King Kong. He worked on all the *Godzilla* films with the director Ishiro Honda until his death in 1970. But it was Tanaka's brainchild, and when the studio "killed off" his creature just 16 months after the old man's heart was broken and he never really recovered.

His first *Godzilla* production had been the first Japanese movie to have a world-wide box-office success, and its drawing power pulled Toho and the Japanese film industry out of the doldrums. Tanaka made a deal with an American distributor, selling the copyright in the movie outright for only \$25,000, at a time when the exchange rate was 360 yen to the dollar. Its primitive strangeness was Americanised by additional footage bringing in the *Perry Mason* star Raymond Burr as a hard-boiled investigative journalist, and thus making the movie even weirder than the

original, but still ridiculously enjoyable. It also earned millions from trade offshoots: dolls, comics, T-shirts and all the other marketing ploys flooded Japan and then the West. There is ominous news of a Hollywood remake by Roland Emmerich in 1998 — the man who brought us *Independence Day* (1996).

In these days of boringly repetitive science-fiction movies with their interminable computerised explosions, it is refreshing to run a video of the first *Godzilla* classic, in which the clumsy beast with its cumbersome tail is animated by a stunt man inside the ungainly carapace. There is something unintentionally hilarious in the way the monster is made to stamp peevishly on paper-maché models of famous landmarks like Tokyo Tower or the Diet Building, or to melt electricity pylons (made of wax) with his scorching radioactive breath. He seems to take an almost childish pleasure in stomping on Dinky cars and trucks and later to snap up the carriages of the Shinkansen express like a

string of beads. It is the most adorable kiddy kitsch, and spawned an ever more comical series of *kaiju eiga* or monster movies with rival creatures bearing archaic SF names like Mothra, Rodan, Gigan, and Hedora co-starring in *Godzilla vs the Thing* (1964), *King Kong vs Godzilla* (1963), *Godzilla vs the Destroyer* (1965) and *Godzilla vs the Snag Monster* (1972) — all gradually becoming more sophisticated in animation techniques. That last-named opus hints at Tanaka's preoccupation with important human themes like ecology, war hysteria, natural catastrophes in what the Americans called "shake and bake" movies and, above all, the so-called "nuclear allergy" the Japanese were said to be suffering from — with good reason.

The first *Godzilla* appeared when the Japanese were still suffering from post-A-bomb trauma. Their sense of foreboding could be felt in the first movie made by Honda and Tsuburaya, the 1953 atomic war picture *Taisho no washi* ("Eagle of the Pacific"). Shortly after it appeared, on 1 March 1954, the Japanese were appalled by the tragic fate of a fishing-boat, *Daiichi Fukuryu Maru* ("Lucky Dragon V"), engulfed in a rain of radioactive ash from a United States thermonuclear weapon test on Bikini Island. One crew member died. The others were all seriously contaminated.

The word "Dragon" in the boat's name was Tanaka's original inspiration for the future *Godzilla*, a dragon-like prehistoric monster awakened from the depths of the Pacific by atom bomb-blasts and coming to terrifying life to avenge himself upon the destroyers of his peace. Behind all the special effects, there was the very human preoccupation of Tomoyuki Tanaka and his production team with the menace of world-wide destruction by the Cold War arsenal of atomic bombs and missiles.

But Tanaka was not just the creator of *Godzilla*. Though he continued to collaborate profitably with the US companies in *Godzilla* adaptations like *Invasion of the Astro-Monsters* (1967, with Nick Adams "normalising" an all-Japanese cast) and a re-run of Raymond Burr in the remake *Godzilla 1985*, Tanaka distinguished himself by working with great Japanese directors like Hiroshi Inagaki, whose *Rikishun Man* won the Golden Lion Award in Venice in 1958.

He produced great historical films like *Kikuchi Okamoto's* 1967 *Nippon no ichiban magotchi* ("Japan's Longest Day"), Shiro Morihama's 1971 *Hakkoda-san* ("Mt Hakkoda"), and above all the superb Akira Kurosawa Toho-period works: *Yojimbo* (1961), *Sanjuro* (1962), *Akagi* (Redhead — a financial disaster in 1963). He was executive producer for Kurosawa's magnificent historical epic *Kagemusha* ("Shadow Warrior") in 1980, and he was in Cannes to see it win the Golden Palm Grand Prix Award — the first Japanese film to do so since *Tristram Shandy* (1954).

James Kirkup

Tomoyuki Tanaka, film producer: born Osaka 1910; married (three children); died Tokyo 2 April 1997.

Professor Sir Malcolm Brown

In 1967, Malcolm Brown, then Professor of Geology at Durham University, was appointed NASA Principal Investigator of the Apollo Moon expeditions.

The first lunar sample arrived in Durham in September 1969, where it was exhibited at the Gulbenkian Museum, and so great was the interest in this single representative of the lunar soil (regolith), that at times the queue of people wishing to see it extended for nearly a mile. The samples received in the laboratory, however, included not only the powdered soil, but actual samples of solid rock and thin and polished sections made from them. The investigation was mainly by physical means using X-ray fluorescence and electron microprobe equipment already installed in the new building occupied by the department. The results had a wide international circulation.

Brown was born in 1925 at Redcar, North Yorkshire, a seaside resort where his parents owned a boarding house. He was educated at Coatham School, Redcar, and in 1944 joined the RAF where he became a friend of the actor Richard Burton. In 1947 he was admitted to University College, Durham, as an undergraduate reading Chemistry, but included Geology as a subsidiary subject in his first year. Working under Professor L.R. Wager, well-known for his exploits on Mount Everest and on the ultrabasic rocks of Skar-

gaard, Greenland, Brown's interest was sufficiently aroused for him to offer geology as his honours subject. He graduated with first class honours in 1950, and when Wager left for the Chair of Geology at Oxford he accompanied him to undertake research there.

The existence of layered ultrabasic rocks in the island of Rhum had recently been discovered and this became his DPhil research subject. On completing his doctorate in 1953 he was offered a Commonwealth Fund (Harkness Fellowship) tenable at Princeton University where, from 1954 to 1955, he furthered his research in igneous rocks. Returning to Oxford he became Lecturer in Petrology in 1955 and was made a Fellow of St Cross College in 1965. He renewed his involvement in Lawrence Wager's interest in layered basic intrusions, eventually described in a book, *Lavender Igneous Rocks* (1968), much of which was written by Brown. Its preparation had involved a visit by both authors to the Bushveld Complex, north of Pretoria in South Africa, generally agreed to be the prototype of such bodies. Brown had also earlier joined an expedition to the remarkable Skargaard intrusion led by Wager and W.A. Deer, which he was amongst the few privileged to visit.

In 1966, aided by a Carnegie Fellowship, he spent a year at the Geophysical Laboratory of the

Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, pursuing a research programme devoted to experiments on the melting of granite. The same year, Kingsley Dunham resigned the Durham Chair to return to the Geological Survey and Brown was invited to fill it. He was already an experienced teacher of petrology; his lectures attracted an increasing number of students and affected their interests in later life. Necessarily he was also obliged to take an increasing part in administration, and this led at the end of his time in Durham to his appointment as Dean of the Faculty of Science and to the Pro-Vice-Chancellorship in 1979.

It was a prolific period of research not only on terrestrial igneous rocks but also on the rocks recovered by the Apollo moon expeditions. Brown led a research team which included Henry Emeleus, Roy Phillips, Granville Holland and, later, Andrew Peckert. These studies led to the publication of 31 original papers, representing about one quarter of Brown's lifetime output. In addition, Brown was still able to find time to initiate major research into the petrology, geochemistry and evolution of the island of Rhum, the Azores and the Antilles and to extend his interest in the Tertiary Igneous rocks of west Scotland.

In 1979 Brown was appointed Director of the NERC Institute of Geological Sciences. IGS had been formed to in-



Brown, second from right, with his Apollo Research Group at Durham University, September 1969 (left to right, Granville Holland, Henry Emeleus and Roy Phillips), on receipt of the first sample of lunar regolith collected by Neil Armstrong

corporate the Geological Survey of Great Britain, the Overseas Geological Surveys and the Geological Museum. One of the earliest effects of Brown's Directorship was the change of name to British Geological Survey, a beneficial step.

Less beneficial was the fact that, owing to changes of government policy towards the research councils, a considerable reorganisation of the staffing was undertaken. This led to heavy losses in the complement of senior posts, particularly those of the rank of SPSO and above. The total staff that had built up

to over 1,150, partly in response to the system of contracting for major spending departments, such as DTI, MFP and the DoE, under Lord Rothschild's initiative, was reduced to about 850, but Brown succeeded in preventing the dismissal of a large number of good junior men who had been engaged on short-term contracts but later, in response to union pressure, had become established.

Meanwhile, less and less funding became available for field operations in the UK and the Director decided to use his scientific staff to write up their re-

sults without engaging in new fieldwork. An unprecedented flow of Sheet and other Memoirs of the Geological Survey was the result, but this was necessarily at the expense of new surveying and of revision. Moreover, since the post of District Geologist in the 11 districts covering the UK had virtually ceased to exist, it was no longer obvious to the interested public to whom they should apply for geological assistance and information.

A further blow was the loss of the Geological Museum. Dating from the early 19th century, this had been established by Sir John

Flett in South Kensington in a new building re-established at the centenary of the Geological Survey in 1935. The growth under the IGS had made necessary a major move of survey field staff away from London, and at Keyworth in Nottinghamshire a recently built teacher-training college had become available; this became the new Geological Survey Headquarters. Malcolm Brown's Directorate witnessed the move of 500 staff here away from the London and Leeds offices; he himself was, we believe, glad to get away from London and raised

with the Research Council the question of the future of the museum. Sadly, the council decided to offer it to the adjacent and recently connected British Museum (Natural History). In view of the strongly practical slant of this geological museum this decision aroused considerable criticism but it was not possible to reverse it and the Geological Survey became the poorer for the lack of its accessible centre in the national capital.

After his retirement from BGS in 1985 Brown returned to Oxford where he set up as Consulting Geologist.

Throughout his life Malcolm Brown attracted and retained many friends. His first marriage, alas, was not a happy one and was dissolved in 1971. His second, in 1985, to Sally Marston was, by contrast, exceptionally happy and brought him the close companionship of a family with two teenage stepdaughters. Above all, it provided what he described as "the 12 happiest years of my life".

Kingsley Dunham and Granville Holland

George Malcolm Brown, geologist: born Redcar, North Yorkshire 5 October 1925; Professor of Geology (Emeritus), Durham University 1967-79, Dean of Faculty of Science 1979-79, Pro-Vice-Chancellor 1979; FRS 1975; Director, British Geological Society 1979-85; Ki 1985; twice married; died Headingley, Yorkshire 28 March 1997.

DEATHS

JONES: David Brian, 30 March 1997, aged 54. A tragic accident in Chob. A loving husband to Nicole, cherished father to Bernard and Dominic, and a dear son to Marjory. Thank you for the love, joy and energy you gave to all with your family and friends. No flowers. Donations, if desired, made payable to Chobian Children's Fund, c/o CWS Funeral Services, 80 Ashpitt Road, Bedford MK42 9HP. Cremation, Wednesday 9 April, 10am, Bedford Crematorium.

RICHARDSON: On 28 March, after a brief illness, at the University College

Births, Marriages & Deaths

Hospital, whilst on holiday from Malin, Professor Keith Clifford, aged 91 years. Funeral at Golden Green Crematorium (West Chapel) on Thursday 10 April at 3pm. No flowers please but donations to Bowler Cancer Research Fund 40 Leverton

& Sons Ltd, 212 Everholt Street, London NW1 1BD.

RUSSELL: Ariadne, known as Arda (née Gordon-Gore), dearly loved wife, mother, grandmother and friend, died 30 March 1997. Funeral at West London Crematorium, East Chapel, Harrow Road, Kensal Green, on Monday 7 April at 1.45pm. Flowers to H.J. Benn & Co, 16 Westminster Court, Aberdeen Place, St John's Wood, NW8 5BN. Before midday, Monday 7 April, or donations to Crozonbury Care Trust, Hemel Hempstead, St Mary Abbott Church Hall, Vicarage Gate, London W3 4HN.

Fortcoming marriages

Mr J.R.E. Turner and Miss B.M. Kennedy. The engagement is announced between James, elder son of Mr Peter Turner, of Dalham, Suffolk, and the Countess of Eppingham, of Blackmore End, Essex, and Bridget, younger daughter of Sir Paul and Lady Kennedy, of Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

Birthdays

Mr Jonathan Agnew, cricketer, 37; Mr Peter Attenborough, former Headmaster of Charterhouse, 59; Mr Don Dover MP, 59; Mr Paul Downton, cricketer, 40; Mrs Margaret Duggan, former tennis champion, 79; Mr Trevor Griffiths, playwright, 62; Mr Jeremy Hand, television reporter, 46; Mr Dave Hill, guitarist, 45; Lord Inchyra, former Director General, British Banks Association, 64; Earl Jellicoe, President, British Heart Foundation, 79; Mr Gregory

Knight MP, 48; Colonel Sir Bryce Knox, vice-chairman, Industries Ltd, 81; Miss Frances Langford, singer and actress, 84; Mr Nick McCarthy, High Commissioner to Cameroon and Ambassador to Gabon, 59; Professor David Melville, chief executive, Further Education Funding Council for England, 54; Mr Barry Reamshoton, general secretary, CWO and Public Services Association, 48; Mr Ian Robertson, Director, National Army Museum, 54; Mr Dave Semmon, football manager, 67; Dame Catherine Tizard, former Governor-General of New Zealand, 66.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 7.24pm. United Synagogue 0171-343 8899, Federation of Synagogues 0171-262 2283, Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues 0171-406 1663, Reform Synagogues of Great Britain 011-349 4751, Spanish and Portuguese Jews 0171-239 2712, New London Synagogue (Moorfields) 0171-328 1026.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS. The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, will marry the Duchess of York, Princess Elizabeth, at Windsor Castle, on Saturday 10 June. The ceremony will be broadcast on television. The Duke of York, Prince Andrew, will marry the Duchess of York, Princess Anne, at Windsor Castle, on Saturday 10 June. The ceremony will be broadcast on television. The Duke of Gloucester, Prince Richard, will marry the Duchess of Gloucester, Princess Margaret, at Windsor Castle, on Saturday 10 June. The ceremony will be broadcast on television. The Duke of Kent, Prince Michael, will marry the Duchess of Kent, Princess Sophie, at Windsor Castle, on Saturday 10 June. The ceremony will be broadcast on television. For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2012 or fax to 0171-293 2010. Charges are 45.50 a line (VAT extra).

Daringly modest, and right for the times

Left, right or centre: we used the old division yesterday in introducing our efforts at extracting from the manifestos the best arguments for supporting them. But already the formula looks pretty useless. There were the Tories, having pushed the fulcrum of political debate in Britain hard to the right over the past decade and a half, clambering for the lifeboats of moderation. And today the traditional compass points seem pretty useless for capturing New Labour's voyage. Is Captain Blair steering centre by centre-right or centre by left-centre?

The first virtue of the Labour Party manifesto is that it is an obituary – a death notice not just on a political party that failed, but on a whole vainglorious, hyperbolic approach to politics that has no place in today's circumstances. It is a document to be welcomed by all those who observe that Britain has changed since the 1970s and think it ought to have changed. History is ended. Ideology is dead. A whole lumber-room of theory has vanished. On Tony Blair's young head the cloth cap of Keir Hardie is as invisible as Clement Attlee's bowler – and as for the Hampstead headgear of Labour's revisionist wing, the man and his document owe nothing at all to Gaiskell, Crosland and what once passed for "new" Labour. Gone, all gone. And rightly so.

There is no model here for how Britain ought to be, five, 10 years into

the next century, for the good reason that Labour now recognises the future will be built by the individuals it hopes to empower. Labour's sense of what is inevitable is pretty much the same as the Tories' – that commercial necessity will require Britain to adapt to world conditions in which the prizes will go to the flexible economies, quick on their feet. It is in the "how" that the difference between the parties crucially lies.

New Labour, to judge from this manifesto, has two principal objectives. It wants to remake the link between people and government. It wants what government does and how it does it to change so that people trust the state and institutions of representative democracy more. From this follow the party's pledges to clean up Parliament's act, to reform the upper house, to return legislative powers to the people of Scotland and to increase self-government in Wales, to re-enfranchise Londoners and to pledge citizens the individual recognition signified by the European Convention on Human Rights.

Less obviously, from Labour's concern for trust in government follows the party's policy for Europe. The British path in Europe will, under Labour, continue to diverge from that of the core EU nations. There is no federalist enthusiasm here. But there is also no mistaking the difference in tone

between Labour's references to Europe and those in the Tory manifesto; Labour's bespeaks a warm enthusiasm, ministers who want to lead the public towards a European destiny for Britain. But they will not get too far ahead: Labour is likely to join the single currency, but not before British opinion has been consulted in a referendum.

In the manifesto's discussion of Europe, one fashionable term is missing. It is "social exclusion" – the phrase that has come to cover the many ways in which people miss out – on mainstream income levels, jobs that pay a decent wage, education that will equip

children to get those jobs, decent housing. Yet the sentiment permeates much of the rest of Labour's offering. It is not sentimental, either; it is more of a cool regret at the loss to UK plc cause by so much human potential going to waste. Looking for a philosophical difference between Labour and the Conservatives? It lies in Labour's conviction, still, that the state can do good especially by pursuing policies that help the excluded into the mainstream. It recalls what Bill Clinton said in his inaugural address earlier this year about the end of Big Government not implying the end of collective purposes

realised through public institutions. But it is from the President's Republican enemy Newt Gingrich that the Labour manifesto borrows its "contract with Britain". Gingrich came a cropper shortly after his American contract was launched, but he had over-reached and Tony Blair has learnt the lesson.

Labour's manifesto dismisses talk of revolutions and hundred-day turn-arounds. Its offered contract with Britain is conspicuously modest, almost as if Labour were a company bidding for a government contract, somewhat more elevated than street cleansing, but along those lines. This contractor knows budgets are limited and if the promises are not kept the contract won't be renewed. So the manifesto proposes clear measures. Some are precise and will be easily checked after five years. Some we get to by inference: Labour's pledge to cut class sizes will be popular if our army of under-achieving children start to do better on objective tests; spending more on patient care will please patients and their families if, and only if, it leads to reduced waiting times and better treatment.

Nuts and bolts stuff, says conventional wisdom – lacking vision – a little disappointing. Wrong, we think: this document is audacious in its modesty. Labour has set itself the test of what can be done, in the real political and fiscal circumstances of late-century

Britain. It is because its answer does not set the Thames alight that it is convincing. We need political reform. But one of these reforms is that we need a party in power that promises what it can deliver, and no more; and then delivers. That would do more to push back public cynicism than a cascade of stirring but cloudy speeches.

A level playing field

If rugby league has done it, rugby union is doing it and football did it a few years ago, what is stopping cricket from hauling itself into modernity and a cherished place in (English) national consciousness? All the elements are there. There is money, from television and from the National Lottery. There is public appetite – Matthew Engel's criticism, in the new *Wisden*, of the game's perception are surely wrong. There are thousands of young boys whose lust for glory (and material reward) is sharp. What's the missing ingredient? Perhaps all it needs is a Nick Hornby to write a cricketing *Fever Pitch*. Colin Firth stands ready to don his whites. Mr Darcy at the wicket – surely a winning combination.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Foreign policy not quite forgotten

Sir: Richard Gott ("A British foreign policy? Forget it", 2 April) is largely right in identifying foreign policy as a neglected issue of this election. But not quite.

No one (yet) is raising questions about the future of the UN system or of the Commonwealth in the hurly-burly of the campaign in this largely rural constituency. But I have been encouraged by the number of electors who are challenging me and the other candidates on Britain's policies towards developing countries.

More important politically will be the far greater numbers, mainly among the over-50s, worried about our position in Europe. This potentially allows for a serious debate on Britain's position in the world, but perceptions all too often do not go beyond the crude "give us back our sovereignty" anti-Europeanism of much of the Tory press.

Certainly there is no overt concern here about whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has a future. But Northamptonshire voters may be more realistic than Mr Gott in realising that whatever happens domestically after the election we are always going to need a ministry with relevant specialist skills. Yes the Tories have shamefully abused the FCO but after serving in it for 23 years it seems to me plain silly to describe it as existing only to cover up "the inexperience of the political class".

JOHN GORDON
Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate for Daventry Constituency
Daventry

Sir: Far be it from CND to suggest that Britain should adopt any "punching above our weight" posture in foreign affairs (2 April) but there are important things happening out there which urgently need discussion.

To start with the easy bit: where is the promised legislation to ratify Britain's signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty?

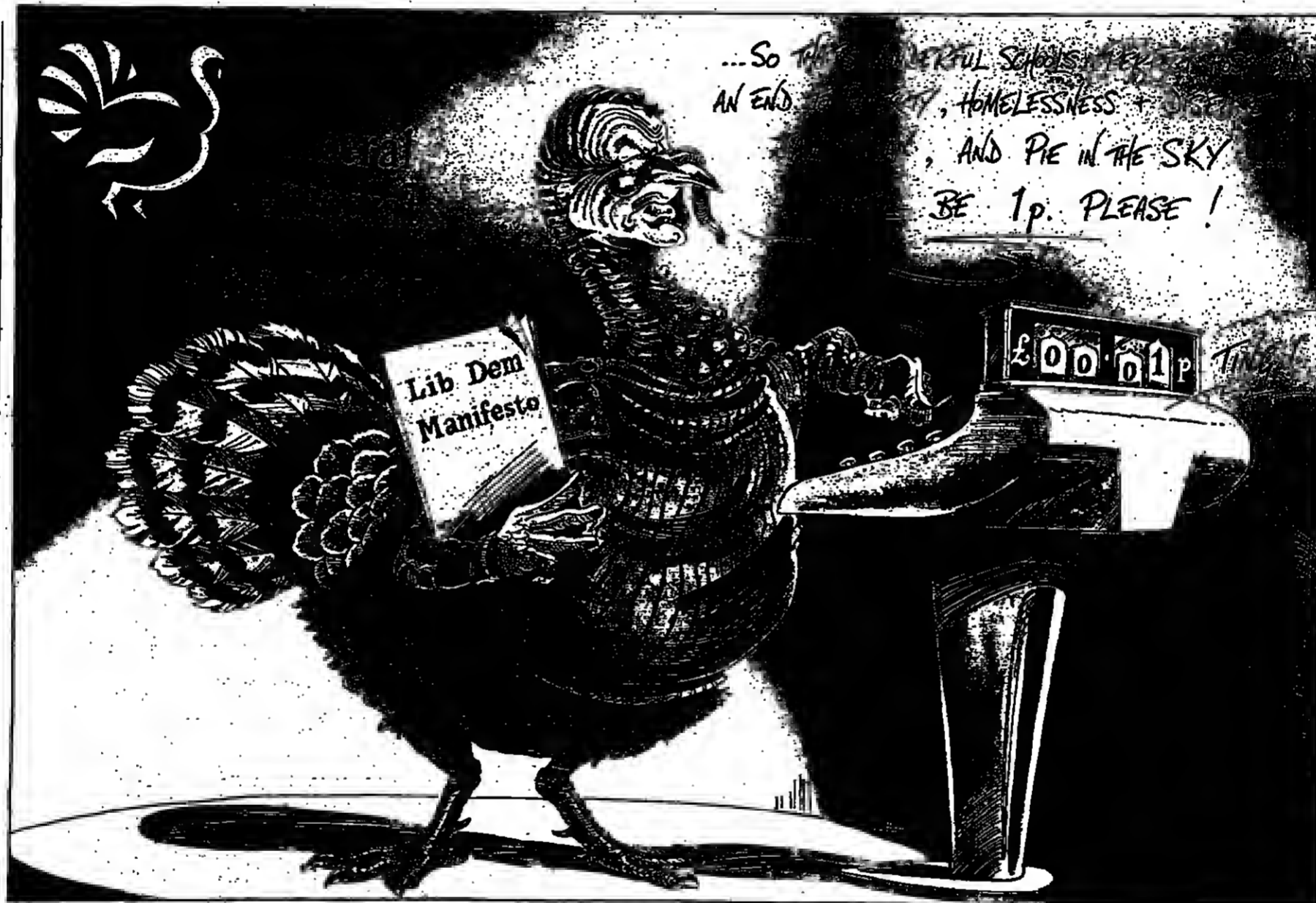
Next, the first Preparatory Committee for the Non-Proliferation Review Conference begins in New York in a week's time. Britain's record on nuclear disarmament – and in particular the introduction of the Trident submarine nuclear missile system – is going to come under close and critical scrutiny.

Meanwhile in Geneva, the UN Committee on Disarmament negotiations towards a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty are bogged down. Will Britain continue to insist on the false distinction between civil and military fissile material production?

Finally, most important of all, when are the political parties going to say anything about the dangers of Nato expansion into Eastern Europe? Can we hope to see any pre-election political heads poked above the parapet? These things will not go away just because they are ignored.

DAVE KNIGHT
Chair
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
London N7

Sir: Richard Gott declares: "as every history student is almost certainly well aware, no election has been fought on a foreign policy issue since 1857". This history student is wondering whether Mr Gott has forgotten the far more



important campaign of 1880: Gladstone's Midlothian election.

In what could well be described as the first modern British political campaign, Gladstone perfected his demagogic technique with a series of attacks on Disraeli's foreign policy. The "evil instinct" which guided Conservatives was to be replaced with "six right principles" of foreign policy. This was at a time when a revolt in Bulgaria could lead to nationwide rioting and international affairs were the stated priority of both party leaders.

Mr Gott may lament the absence of foreign affairs from the current election campaign, but perhaps he should be relieved. Both Disraeli and Gladstone had grand ideas about foreign policy; both of them ended up frustrated as their knowledge of the problems failed to match their ambitions.

ARTHUR SNELL
Magdalen College
Oxford

Disabled voters are waiting

Sir: It is interesting to note that during the election fervour, presently gripping the country, no mention has been made about disability issues. As one in ten of the population is reputed to have a disability, this represents a large voting bloc within society.

If the parties wish to have our votes then they must address the issues. Since 1981 (Year of the Disabled) much was promised, yet very little has progressed into fruition. The sad spectacle of the minister for the disabled effectively defeating a disability bill was for

the majority of disabled people the last straw. Politicians, wake up to disability issues, we are waiting with interest.

THOMAS B M WINGROVE
Dunford
Kent

Sir: In order to avoid the problems of parliamentary candidates tainted by sleaze and "personal indiscretions", I suggest that the Conservative Party adopts a policy promoted, yet abandoned by the Labour Party – all women short lists.

When was the last time a female Member of Parliament left the Commons in disgrace?

EBBERA KINGTON
Ewell
Surrey

Teachers need to be stricter

Sir: With reference to your leading article, "Giving up on children – now that's naughty", 2 April, I cannot help but wonder if you would hold the same opinion if your own child was victimised, threatened or bullied at school?

Everyone is worrying about the "insubordinate" children, but there is something fundamental missing in this debate – the rights of those children who do not fall into the above category. Why should they have to suffer because the adults around them cannot decide on an effective solution? Why should they be subject to violence and

disruption when they are actually trying to study and learn?

Discussing this issue with my peers (a few of whom are teachers themselves), it came to light that a majority of us feel stricter teaching is needed. We all attended state schools, and every one of us remembers the most effective (and respected) teachers were those who firstly refused to let anyone disrupt a class and secondly, took no verbal abuse from a pupil. Teachers whose tone of voice commanded silence or attention.

I lament the fact that teachers are almost scared to breathe these days, for fear of being accused of something ridiculous by a trouble-making child.

Does it not seem a strange coincidence that as the authority bestowed on teachers diminishes, the number of aggressive and disruptive children increases?

VICTORIA BENSTED
Twickenham

Mouthed to death

Sir: Who invents those absurd, meaningless, ungrammatical words and phrases – zero tolerance, level playing fields, sleaze, smart money, taxbreak, spin doctors?

They get taken up and mouthed to death. Perhaps the chief culprit is the erstwhile "squeaky clean" BBC. We need a new campaign to clean up or purify the English language.

FR MILEST
Beaminster
Dorset

Chickens unfit for consumption

Sir: Imported American chickens may pose a serious health risk (report, 3 April) but I fear that the situation may be little better with British chickens. Recent reports have shown that anything between 33 per cent and 50 per cent of British chickens are contaminated with either salmonella or campylobacter, the two main sources of food poisoning in this country.

Indeed, a recent *Which* survey found 32 out of 90 chickens and chicken portions bought from supermarkets to be "unfit for human consumption". Radical reforms – on farm and in abattoirs – are needed to reduce both the food safety and animal welfare threats posed by the poultry industry.

PETER STEVENSON
Political and Legal Director
Compassion in World Farming
Petersfield
Hampshire

Aged juror

Sir: Recently I returned a summons to attend for jury service, pointing out that I was too old. In his acknowledgement the Chief Clerk says "I am able to excuse you from attendance for jury service on this occasion" and I am left wondering whether they expect me to get younger?

SIMON CARSE
Lindfield
West Sussex

Society needs special hospitals

Sir: There has been much debate about the role of special hospitals for the mentally disordered and the main emphasis has been that in modern day society there is no place for them ("Sorting mad from bad", 26 March).

What is noticeable is the lack of discussion about an alternative to closing down the special hospitals other than placing patients in regional secure units, which, incidentally, have a much higher recidivist rate on discharge than that of special hospitals.

The Matthew Trust, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, has been fully involved with the four special hospitals in this country and we believe that the closing down of special hospitals would be a very inhumane step. Special hospitals create a therapeutic environment for the seriously disturbed in a secure setting which cannot be achieved in any other form other than putting such people in penal establishments where the quality of care, as has been admitted by the Department of Health, is 50 per cent poorer than that in the National Health Service.

Not only does this Trust believe that special hospitals should be retained and given further financial assistance but we also believe that a further two special hospitals, based on the Broadmoor model, should be established. Special hospitals should be developed as a good example of humanitarian concern for the seriously mentally ill.

PETER THOMPSON
Director
The Matthew Trust
London SW6

Investigation of deaths in custody

Sir: At a time when the two main political parties vie with each other over dealing with young offenders it was with sadness and anger that we learnt about the death of the 15-year-old who was found unconscious in Hartlepool police station on 1 April (report, 3 April).

This death raises profound questions about the care afforded juveniles in police stations and about the adequacy of current guidelines within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act Codes of Practice and of their implementation. It is Inquest's experience in over 16 years of monitoring deaths in police custody and working with bereaved families that guidelines are frequently insufficiently adhered to and even where they are, do not provide a proper framework in which the police should exercise the duty of care they owe to those in their custody.

We have no confidence in a mechanism of investigation which allows the Cleveland police to investigate a death in Cleveland police custody. These investigations are secret and open to accusations of bias. The content is never made public or available to the bereaved family and yet it forms the basis on which the Police Complaints Authority decide whether disciplinary charges are to be brought and whether procedural changes should be recommended and it strongly influences the shape of the inquest. The inquest is the only public forum for examining such deaths with its many procedural problems – notably the lack of legal aid for representation for the bereaved, the lack of prior disclosure of any documentation and its narrow remit.

A new government must act to ensure that bereaved families are given access to all the information about their loved one's death before the inquest and institute a public inquiry into the whole investigative and legal process which follows deaths in custody to ensure that families can discover the truth about how their loved one died and the police are fully accountable to the public they supposedly serve.

DEBBIE COLES
HELEN SHAW
Co-Directors
Inquest
London N4

Brutal legacy

Sir: In his article about the failure of politicians to do anything over the years for architecture (28 March), Jonathan Glancey omits a period when architecture was at the top of the political agenda. This was the Fifties and Sixties, when architects persuaded the Labour government to rebuild bombed Britain in the image of Le Corbusier's cities in the air. Social housing, new towns, universities and schools all got the very political modernist treatment. This was to be a brave socialist new world.

But the architects blew the opportunity handed them by Labour. Although some of the buildings of that time were outstanding, the Clarence Road Estate in Rochampton, the Festival Hall, and the Cambridge University Centre, the lesser architects imposed on Britain a brutal legacy of ill-thought-out stained concrete blocks which soon fell down or had to be blown up.

Not surprisingly, the politicians have not trusted architects since. RICHARD SARSON
London SW2

essay

Sex, food, and money. Sex and diets. Sex on the Internet. Greed, car-sex, *Baywatch* (I'll get back to *Baywatch*), are you with me? (A newspaper editor once told me you can say anything so long as you put the word sex, that's S-E-X, in every sentence). Can I get on with some thoughts about the DUMBING DOWN of just about everything now? We are talking the world made idiot-proof, the language morose, the common folk spoon-fed intellectual baby food that's been pre-chewed to make it go down easy, people dependent on a million channels of sound-bite, coned into the passive acceptance of shrink-wrapped verities or, worse still, proud to be thick. According to the pundits, we are talking a planet apparently now almost entirely occupied by a new breed of Epsilon Semi-morons, but then who reads *New World* any more? I mean who reads books?

Life for dummies is what we are talking here. The Information Age without information, only raw data, gobblets of news without any context, sound-bites which are now down to, is it 14 seconds, or is it eight? All those satellites. All those channels. Not to mention 106,000 books published every year in Britain, all apparently unread, if you heed the daily commentaries of wise persons.

Every day I read commentaries about the evils of the new information delivery systems, how they contribute to the dumbing down of society, about the airwaves and newspapers stuffed with stuff, but where nothing means more than the thing itself and all things are, therefore, equal: Michael Jackson's baby, oestrogen replacement therapy, Labour Party economic policy, Zaire's rebel soldiers, Selma Hayek's Oscar dress, Bill Clinton's banky-panky, mortgage rates, topless darts. This is a situation where exactly the same value is accorded to Jeremy Paxman and the News Bunnies.

Anyone who's got cable in the UK knows that, just like the States, 72 channels of TV means 72 channels of mostly crap. You spell that C-R-A-P and it's synonymous with D-U-M-B. Now does the coming of Channel 5 hold out any particular promise of vigorous debate or brilliant entertainment. The rest of TV is in a pretty parlous state, too: costume dramas look tackier every



Dumb, dumber, dumbest: More and more films, such as the Oscar-winning *Forrest Gump* and *Dumb and Dumber* (above) are making idiocy and ignorance fashionable

And the dumb shall inherit the Earth

It's everywhere you look. *Baywatch*, soundbites, the crumbling of art and culture, the disappearance of general knowledge – Dumbing Down is upon us. Or is this just the grumble of ageing Luddites who can't cope? Reggie Nadelson looks at the phenomenon that could even win over the mullahs

year, the scripts are sillier, the classics dumbed down to suit the attention span of a video generation of channel-surfers. (Did anyone catch Jane Eyre for Dummies the other week?) Thrillers are less thrilling, documentaries personality-driven, everything easier, simpler. Youth TV, narrow-casting. You can almost hear the universal television barker cry, "Dumb

on Down". With dozens of channels you get narrow-casting and with narrow-casting you get narrow minds, at least according to Walter Cronkite, America's venerable newswoman. You can head straight for the golf channel or the celebrity station now without ever encountering so much as a headline about Zaire or Albania as you just might have done

when forced to watch the network news or read a newspaper. The problem's not just cable television, of course; anyone who watches *News at Ten* or reads the tabloids can tell you that. You can read the dumbing down of just everything in pretty much everything, it seems. In the death of books. The death of television. The takeover by television. Paul Johnson's view of television as the satanic medium – it was Johnson, wasn't it? The corruption of the language, bad grammar, the illiterate young, the stupid old, pop culture, pop culture applied to high art, high art made easy whether it's classical musicians in cowboy suits or CDs of Beethoven-for-Brides, I don't even want to think about education.

By God, we're talking moral decay here, we're talking the breakdown of civil society, the

end of family values, the rise of crime, the takeover by machines of the human spirit, the catering to the politically correct in aid of the know-nothings and care less. It is the end of the world as we know it, the end of European culture, of that universal store of facts once known as General Knowledge, a shared file you could assume most reasonably well educated people could access. I mean, without it, how would *Mastermind* have existed, or *University Challenge* endure?

Last week alone I met several educated people in London who did not know that Arthur C Clarke invented the geo-stationary satellite and one who insisted that Sinologists study respiratory problems. As Miss Adelaide says (in *Gus & Dolly*), "a person could develop a cold".

What I really think is we're all beginning to sound like a lot of crusty old Luddites who

sometimes want to break up the machines out of sheer ignorance. The computer won't start. My head hurts. Gimme a book!

What I really think is that "Dumbing Down" is, in fact, this year's Political Correctness. It's the buzz phrase, the catchall assertion, used by backs in search of a subject or dinner party guests looking for high-minded banter. Maybe in the end it's just a piece of rhetorical journo-prop, a way to fend off our feeling that a little piece of familiar territory – books, classical music, morality – has been colonised by a new generation and we don't really get it.

No one reads. Books are dead. (It used to be God, but it's books now.) Someone recounted the following story to me recently. A bright young guy, a guy with a BA from Oxford or Cambridge or maybe it was Harvard, interviewed a

famous writer. So impressed was the writer with the said young man that he asked, "So what are you reading these days?" The young man was somewhat taken aback. He replied, "Oh, I don't read."

Shocked? Well, it turned out the young guy did other stuff – music, movies, videos, computers. The revenge of the kids, it also turns out, is that they are connected to the new technology in their viscera, plugged into the Web, the Net, in a way we'll never be. (They can program the VCR!)

They don't even have to stick it in our faces; they just get on with reinventing the world. They are not dumb. Just different. There is a Dumb World, all right, but there always has been and no nostalgia merchant's going to convince me otherwise.

It's not about computers or books, though, or the destruction of the novel by the politi-

cally correct or whether opera's in decline. It's about a territory where people, and they come in all colours and all classes, are aggressively stupid, sometimes violent, mostly angry, always illiberal. These are people who go in for a lot of childlike posturing, who figure anyone who's smart is arrogant and stuck-up, a geek, a nerd. They are convinced that it's cool to be dumb because it's not what you know that matters but what you feel. And they are suckers.

They are suckers for anything or anyone that panders to them, and with all those channels, there is plenty of media to do it these days. This is the dumbing down that's scary, and it's scarier because a very few people own an awful lot of the territory now. They are not dumb, either, the moguls who own the airwaves. They are very very smart.

That's the scary stuff. In the real land of the dumb, feeling is more important than fact, analysis, thought or intelligence. Feeling is what matters because if you get them by their emotions, they're yours for life.

It's the stuff of totalitarianism, of course. The most successful totalitarian societies depended heavily on the emotional power of carefully skewed news, all of it fed into and fed by a particular agenda.

Remember the old Soviet weather reports? If it was snowing in Moscow and freezing cold, it was good clean health-giving cold, the socialist snow refreshing, the very weather an uplift. A warm day in California was a soggy, evil, polluted kind of day, all that capitalistic sunshine pouring bad rays on the witless population.

On the other hand, I'm not sure I want some pure intelligence in charge, either. If the major information-delivery systems were programmed by the good and the great, if the channels were altogether un-dumb, then who would tempt the oppressed?

It was *Dallas* and *Dynasty* that brought down the Berlin Wall, if you recall, the tantalising glimpse of big cars and big blondes that spurred many East Germans to action. Much the same thing is happening now from China to Iran, thanks to satellites. In Iran, for instance, *Baywatch* is very very big. There, many young people willingly risk the wrath of the mullah for a look at Pamela Anderson. I mean what upstanding kid would risk his soul for a glimpse of *Panorama*?

Pamela Anderson, may the force be with you. It is you, Pam, and the whole *Baywatch* team, who will rescue the world from the religious ideologues, it is you who will make dumb good. It is *Baywatch* that will probably make it finally OK for us to tread water in a delicious sea of dumb. Because it is *Baywatch*, delivered by the new technology, that will probably cause the ayatollahs to take off their robes and come on in and dumb down with the rest of us.

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Linguistic dysfunction – before and after

As the election campaign grinds on into its fifth long year, let us turn aside today and consider something altogether higher, that is, the grand workings of the English language. Yes, it's time to welcome back Professor Wordsmith in answer all your linguistic inquiries, and this week he is taking questions on the mysterious world of prefixes and suffixes. All yours, Prof. How do you mean, prefixes and suffixes?

Professor Wordsmith writes: Blimey, don't they teach you anything in school these days? No, not much, apart from unarmed combat. Professor Wordsmith writes: Oh. Well, a prefix is something that goes on the front of a word and a suffix goes on the back. Like a red nose goes on the front of a car and a sign saying "Windsurfers do it standing up" on the back? Professor Wordsmith writes: Something like that. Take a word like "polytechnic". The main part of the word is "technic", which is a Greek word meaning "art" or "skill". The "poly" bit is a

Greek, so "polytechnic" means a place offering many skills. But all polytechnics have become universities now, haven't they? Professor Wordsmith writes: Yes. Well, uni- means "one", not "many" like poly-. So should universities be called multiversities?

Professor Wordsmith writes: No. Why not? Professor Wordsmith writes: It would take too long to explain. I have got all the time in the world.

Professor Wordsmith writes: Well, I haven't. Next question, please! In the word "megabyte" is "mega" the prefix or "byte" the suffix?

Professor Wordsmith writes: Well, mega- is the prefix, but actually they've got it wrong. It is meant to mean "many bytes", but "mega" isn't Greek for "many" – it's Greek for big. So it should be "polybyte". "Megabyte" just means "big byte". Technocrats often get things like this wrong. When they called non-stereophonic records "monaural", they got it wrong. "Monaural"



Miles Kingston

means, "having just one ear". What they should have said was "monophonic". I have noticed that "dys-" has become a very popular prefix, as in "dystopian" and "dysfunctional". Is there a word "dysphonic" and could I use it? Professor Wordsmith writes: Yes, there is, but it doesn't refer to a nasty noise, as you probably hope. It refers to a speech defect, from "dysphonia". The word you want is "cacophonous", which does mean bad noise in Greek. If you're looking for new words, one nice one waiting to be picked up and made trendy is "dysphoria",

which is the opposite of "euphoria". "Dysphoria" and "dysphoria" sound more like the names of flowers to me.

Professor Wordsmith writes: Well spotted! The commonest way of forming a flower name is in fact to add -ia to a name, as in huddellia or dahllia, or poinciana, or poinsettia.

Do poinciana and poinsettia come from the same man? Professor Wordsmith writes: No. One comes from a Frenchman called de Poinci and the other from an American called JB Poinsett.

So, could a "sinfonietta" be a flower named after a man called Mr Sinfonetti?

Professor Wordsmith writes: No. If it were a flower, it would have to be a "sinfonietta".

Then why isn't it called a "poinciana" in that case? Professor Wordsmith writes: You got me there, squirrel. Touché. Next, please!

Are there any prefixes or suffixes one should avoid using?

Professor Wordsmith writes: I should steer clear of words ending in -ette and -id if I were you. -ette was always a very useful diminutive suffix used to

form "cigarette" from "cigar" and "courgette" from "courge", but it has now been ruined by BBC people and by Ray Charles. Come again?

Professor Wordsmith writes: I think it was Ray Charles who first used the suffix to signify a backing group, as in "Ray Charles and the Raelites". And it was all those camp producers at the BBC who started talking about "featurettes" and "notettes" and "memettes". Nowadays you even get flippy discs called Diskettes.

Hmm. What about -iad? Professor Wordsmith writes: Oh, this is something that has suddenly appeared in 1997 with Schubert's bicentenary, and the word Schubertiad.

What's wrong with that? Professor Wordsmith writes: Nothing, except that nowadays, when we put "-iad" on the end of everything to mean a charity concert, like Bandaid or Worldaid, everyone thinks the word is Schubertiad, and that it's some sort of gig in aid of poor bachelors dying of syphilis in Vienna.

Thanks, Prof, and keep those questions rolling in!

0800 555 5255

How can the Tories deal with Tony now?

British Conservatism has faced a dilemma about how to deal with Tony Blair almost since he became leader in 1994. Wasn't he just an ersatz Tory and shouldn't voters simply be urged to stick with the real thing? Or was he just the acceptable face of an unchangeable party? Two years, and a new Clause IV later, the argument changed: OK, the party has been reformed but it's still dangerous. Was this a new danger or an old danger? The theoreticians pondered long and hard and decided that the danger, too, was new.

But the underlying dilemma was never quite resolved. Lord Saatchi and Sir Tim Bell, since 1979 the two gurus of Tory campaigning, have never come to blows. But they have disagreed pretty consistently about how to turn on Tony Blair. Sir Tim never wanted the demo eyes "New Danger" campaign at all, preferring instead - another idea, to be fair, developed by Lord Saatchi - a smiling Labour leader with the punning slogan "What lies behind the smile?". Theo Sir Tim, who despite his Thatcherite views, had grave doubts about the salience of Europe as an election issue, was unable to stop Lord Saatchi from persuading Brian Mawhinney to run the New Labour Euro Danger ads, with their now famous lico. There was even disagreement about the slogan for Wednesday's manifesto launch - with one Saatchi proposal "True to Britain" only being rejected at the eleventh hour in favour of "You Can Only Be Sure with the Conservatives" - internally agreed to be the only acceptable phrasing for "Better the Devil You Know".

Ad wars are a sure symbol of anxiety at the top. But otherwise they don't tell you very much except insofar as they symbolise a larger, deeper difficulty. And that has always been how to turn the argument against Blair. It's a difficulty which, if anything, is even greater after two days of sizzle-free politics. The reason is precisely the modesty and attainability of the specific pledges the Labour leader reaffirmed yesterday. In a stunning performance, perhaps his most stunning yet, Blair held out the prospect of radical change, while almost revealing in the word "limited" for what he promises for the first time.

In one way the Labour manifesto is more momentous than it looks. It is one part of Tory folklore that at one of his frequent meetings with Lord Rothermere, Tony Blair said that New Labour was to be the post-1945 welfare state as De Gaulle was to Algeria. The meaning of this statement - which his closest colleagues do not rush to deny he made - was that only a Labour government could extract the taxpayer from the welfare state's most wasteful and unnecessary commitments because only a Labour government could be trusted not to destroy it in the process. In describing how they will reduce the welfare bill, Labour politicians refer to the use of the windfall tax to bring at least 250,000 under-25s back onto the labour market and off dependency. And that would be a change as significant as it is, initially, incremental: the seeds of hope for all those neighbourhoods without it, where the young are second-generation unemployed and the most vivid role model is the crack dealer with the mobile phone on the corner of the street.



Donald Macintyre

Blair yesterday was as liberated from his party's past as his opponent is hemmed in by his

supporters to warn them that Labour may prove as bold, or even bolder, about the unfinished business of his own government than he intends to be. Much less that the savings will go not to an ideological programme of state shunting (which doesn't much interest the voters who defected after 1992) but on better education and health, the two public services which profoundly do matter to them. Blair stakes a convincing claim to have found a way of fulfilling genuinely Labour goals without increasing, overall, the size of the state.

That doesn't mean that the Tories have nothing to go on. They will argue vigorously that those aspects of the European Social Chapter decided by qualified majority voting threaten the kind of labour market regulation Blair says he doesn't want. More tellingly, perhaps, William Wedderburn, the Chief Secretary, will press for more convincing answers from Blair and Gordon Brown as to how - since they are relying on the government's own spending projections - they will make up the "hole" of several billion pounds left if you subtract privatisation and frozen local authority receipts from the totals. (It's just as well for Labour, in this context, that the Tories are committed to a new £1.2bn family tax allowance which it also expects, vaguely and uncharacteristically, to fund from growth. And just as well for the Tories that Kenneth Clarke resisted some of the more far-reaching and expensive social-engineering aspirations of Norman Blackwell, head of the Downing Street Policy Unit.)

The Tories, bad as the auspices are, have started to fight in earnest. But they are dealing with what one of the brightest of the coming 1997 Tory intake yesterday described in a chance conversation as "perhaps the best British politician for several decades. And getting better". Blair yesterday was a leader as liberated from his party's past as his opponent is hemmed in by his. There are charges against which he will still have to defend his party. But yesterday you could see, finally, what the Tories are up against.

But that may not be all: for Labour's commitment to reducing the welfare bill - and in the process generating more funds for education and health - will surely, in time, go further. Labour may be able to reduce universal benefits such as old-age pensions and child benefit for those rich enough not to need them. Its willingness to replace universal child benefit for 16- to 18-year olds suggests as much. It may produce its own scheme for privatising much of the social insurance system, as Frank Field, the party's most creative social security thinker, wants it to. Peter Lilley's ambitious plan to do so may make it easier for Labour to enact something, if not similar, at least as ambitious. Pressed on the details of the welfare reform agenda, Blair is breathtakingly unfazed: "We make a virtue of the fact that we cannot prescribe a blueprint for this in opposition."

This is especially galling to the Tory right; it means that it may be left to Blair to slaughter one of the dragons still breathing after 18 years of Thatcher-Major. It means that Labour have a half-hidden agenda - though in no more sinister sense than Margaret Thatcher had one on the unions and state ownership in 1979. But it is not one that it is easy for John Major to attack. It will scarcely impress core Tory supporters to warn them that Labour may prove as bold, or even bolder, about the unfinished business of his own government than he intends to be. Much less that the savings will go not to an ideological programme of state shunting (which doesn't much interest the voters who defected after 1992) but on better education and health, the two public services which profoundly do matter to them. Blair stakes a convincing claim to have found a way of fulfilling genuinely Labour goals without increasing, overall, the size of the state.

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Labour promises a new Camelot

by Polly Toynbee



The odour of sanctity hovers in the air as Tony Blair, the parfait knight, speaks of his divine mission to save our divided society

What of the content? He promised nothing new, and true to his word, his covenant gave us nothing new. But there were all the promises laid down over the last couple of years that mark the cornerstones for any liberal doubters - the minimum wage, an end to youth unemployment, devolution and a referendum on PR. But side by side sits that christian democrat flavour that some liberals may like rather less: "We will build strong families" sounds more like a threat than a promise. Yet embedded in this manifesto I find enough talk of social justice to persuade me that he means it. Maybe once, though, long ago in the first flush of victory, John Major

really meant to give us a "classless" society. The serious problem is enshrined in the manifesto's second commandment, that most holy vow of all - no extra income tax for anyone and a cut in VAT on fuel. There follows a Jesuitical argument: "The myth that the solution to every problem is increased spending has been comprehensively dispelled under the Conservatives. Spending has risen. But more spending has brought neither greater fairness nor less poverty." A good debating point maybe, but a gaping non-sequitur that does not fill the gaping hole in Labour's spending plans. Here, for example, is an echo of the Tories' equally un-

nanced commitment: "We will raise spending on the NHS in real terms every year and put the money towards patient care." But how? The Tory spending plans that Gordon Brown has signed up to mean a real cut over the next few years according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, a £500 hole the like of which the NHS has never ever experienced. So

where is the money to come from? And education likewise faces cuts, right now. On the mendacious promises front, the Tory manifesto is certainly even more profligate but neither party can possibly govern on the figures they both profess to have vowed to keep within.

So as we gaze upon those shining faces, we already know that when they step inside their ministries they may be noble knights but if they have on armour and on sword, how can they do battle for truth, beauty and justice? Here we gaze into the eyes of the leader. "Trust me," he says and at this point we have no choice but to believe in the miracle of the leaves and the fishes. Of course we do not know how the leaves and fishes trick was done. Maybe suppliers had been secretly contracted in advance, plans laid, bread baked and fishes caught. Or maybe it really was a miracle. Or maybe we shall all go hungry. Only Time Will Tell.

What else might we meditate upon in Camelot? We know from the history of all politics and indeed from the sad story of the round table itself that internal strife, factions, jealousies and bitter hatreds break out in time. Beneath this goodly unity there seethes a fair amount of nascent rivalry already. Wait until the great offices of state are handed out. It is hard to recall any cabinet of any party where there has been genuine close friendship and friendship between the Chancellor, the Home Secretary, the foreign or defence secretary or the President of the Board of Trade. Even if as new MPs they were friends, when they reach those offices they hunt aloof, driven further apart by the visceral separatism of Whitehall departmental baronies. They may look good up there today, Prescott, Brown, Beckett and Cook, flanking their leader so loyally, but politics is not the communion of saints.

In the court of King Blair, there are well-established loathings between the rival armies of some of his barons. And some of his own heathen strut a little too much in his name. Will Blair, like Henry V on ascending the throne, have the wisdom to abandon one or two of his more presumptuous courtiers? We shall see.

All politics is high drama and for we spectators, a new cast of characters is long overdue. Today, there is charm in their ebullience; their optimism is infectious. Sometimes it is a relief not to have a crystal ball.

Too many 'ologists make you boring



Suzanne Moore

Experts are everywhere, revealing the already obvious, fitting us into little boxes. But they miss what really makes us tick

Never mind the manifestos, bring on anyone with half an "ology" to tell us what to think. Who cares what the damn thing says when you can get a graphologist or two to analyse the handwriting? What does Mr Blair's hand reveal about Britain's would-be prime minister? He would do well in the banking profession, he has above average motivational drive, he does not need team approval, he has a streak of ruthlessness, says one Diane Simpson. To Andrea Lytleton, a member of the British Academy of Graphology, his letter suggests "that it was written at great speed by a man who was better on the big picture than the detail". Let me give you another graphological insight to blow you away: the hits he has underlined - such as education being his party's number one priority - are the bits he wants to stress as particularly important. Wow!

Where would we, the punters, be without such expert advice? Perhaps we should not be allowed to vote at all unless we can prove that we have consulted the various experts, unless we have studied a thousand opinion polls in order to find out what our opinion is exactly, unless we have sat through hours of experts expertly bickering on *Newsnight*.

Elections are obviously boom time for experts of all descriptions, but modern life is crawling with the bugger already. We, the media, live in a symbiotic relationship with experts of all species. We use them to pad out all our articles. We use them to confirm our prejudices. We use them to fill up space. We use them as a substitute for common sense.

It is no longer enough to know or believe or even feel certain things to be true, for now we have a fanatical

reverence for the quasi-science of statistics. Experts provide evidence, even if that evidence amounts to little more than 60 people and a dog filling out a questionnaire in Bradford. Basil Fawcett used to yell at Sybil that, if she ever went on *Mastermind*, her specialist subject would be "the bleedin' obvious" yet the bleedin' obvious is now big business. Gurus, management consultants, human resource agencies, psychologists, image makers, PR people now operate as a whole substratum of public life. They impart information which we are supposed to take as seriously as they take themselves.

The British Psychological Society, which meets this week in Edinburgh, regularly offers up insights which make you seriously wonder about the psychological health of its members. Amongst this week's astonishing findings are: "Adolescent girls on diets get increasingly miserable as the weeks pass. This is especially true if they see their weight loss goal as hard to reach." This is the stunning result of research by the University of New South Wales in Australia.

Our own Birkbeck College tells us: "Second generation British Asian adolescents are suffering more stress than their white counterparts. They also think there is more conflict in their families than their counterparts in India experience." Their increased stress levels come from possible cultural conflict. Can you believe it?

People whose teenage obsessions with film or pop stars continue well into adult life may be at risk psychologically. We know this because some psychologists from Northampton have investigated the effects of teen idols on 163 men and women.

Oh, and just in case you wondered whether there are better ways of controlling children than smacking them: children benefit from rules that are "consistent, understandable and predictable".

If this wasn't enough we have been further entranced this week by research that suggests that mice given more space, more toys, more food develop better than mice kept in "poor" homes. Middle-class mice tend to do better than deprived ones.

What is all this information for? Does anyone actually act on it? We are told not to smoke, eat badly or exceed our alcohol units but we take little notice. The bombardment of expert advice contributes to an increasingly regulatory culture in which those in power impart information to individuals who then ignore it.

This abdication of responsibility has a euphemism - "increased consumer choice". Having just returned from the holy land of consumerism, America, I was struck, as always, by what is, despite the mythology, an essentially prohibitive culture. You cannot move for signs and symbols telling you not to do things. You can't cross the road when you want to, have a drink in a bar till you are 21 or visit a urinal without encountering dozens of messages telling you to just say no to drugs.

All of this is doubtless the work of experts who however expert appear to have almost zero insight into human motivation. The one subliminal message that is being conveyed by all these signs is "Do as you are told". Thank God then that we do not do as we are told and that we do not tell experts the truth. This is why opinion polls get things wrong, why psychologists can't

see the wood for the trees and why, at a time of supposed excitement, everything feels a bit flat.

What all these experts studiously ignore, deny the existence of, or maybe feel is far too vague to take into consideration, is the unconscious. Yes, we know we should not smack our children, eat too much, worship David Cassidy, loathe Tony Blair, feel so bloody apathetic, but we are not entirely in control of ourselves.

Experts live in a universe where control is possible, where knowledge can be handed down from on high and we are supposed to be grateful. They are the only people in the world who believe absolutely what other folks tell them. All the mad kow-towing to focus groups tells you little about what is really going on apart from the fact that if you sit a lot of people in a room together they will tend to agree with each other, that some kind of bland consensus will emerge. Is that the way to run a country?

Opinion polls, focus groups, psychologists, graphologists, experts on voting patterns are all bearing down heavily upon us. Their understanding of how people work bears little relation to my experience of how we make up our minds, change our minds, lose our minds or are perfectly able to think two opposing things at once. They would like our behaviour to be as predictable as their banal conclusions. I pray to God we are more exciting than the experts give us credit for. Otherwise we will be stuck forever with the bleedin' obvious.

I guess it's up to us. As the old joke about how many therapists it takes to change a light bulb reminds us, it only takes one. But the light bulb has gotta really, really want to change.

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business & city

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Leasing chief shares mystery rail windfall

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

John Prideaux, chairman of the Angel train leasing company and a former senior board director of British Rail, has shared in a mystery windfall stemming from his part in the controversial rail privatisation process.

The special payout was made just before Christmas to a private consultancy company, Prideaux and Associates - in which Mr Prideaux has a third share, by GRS Holdings, the company formed by the Japanese banking group Nomura as a vehicle to bid for Angel in 1995.

Until now Mr Prideaux had been assumed to have come away relatively empty-handed from the rail sell-off in comparison with directors of the two other rolling stock companies, Porterbrook and Eversholt.

The documents show that on 23 December Prideaux and Associates was allocated 375 shares in GRS which it then sold

Porterbrook sale to Stagecoach last year brought profits of £300m and netted £36m personally for its managing director, Sandy Anderson. Angel was the only rolling stock company not to be sold to a management buyout team, although Nomura put in bids for all three during the privatisation process.

Nomura yesterday confirmed the windfall was to acknowledge advice from Prideaux and Associates given during a £2.2bn (£1.4bn) deal put together by GRS last October, in which it bought another leasing operation in the US from the phone giant, AT&T.

Documents filed recently with Companies House give a clue to the unusual dividend distribution shared with Mr Prideaux in an arrangement which is understood to have been framed for tax reasons.

The documents show that on 23 December Prideaux and Associates was allocated 375 shares in GRS which it then sold

back to the company on the same day for the nominal sum of just £75. Another GRS shareholder, the California-based leasing advisory group Babcock & Brown, was allocated 2,500 shares which it also sold immediately, for £500. In addition, a Gibraltar-registered company called Graylands appeared on the register with 520 shares, which were sold for £104.

Although Nomura's use of GRS as a vehicle to make further acquisitions has been well-publicised, the existence and nature of these dividends remained a mystery. Last October GRS announced it had bought AT&T's leasing arm, AT&T Capital, for \$2.2bn. The company employs 2,800 people involved in diverse leasing activities, including providing telephone equipment to 500,000 customers.

Guy Hands, Nomura director and chairman of GRS, said the GRS share allocations listed with Companies House formed a "divided distribution to



On the right track John Prideaux, pictured in his BR days, is now chairman of the Angel leasing company. Photograph: PA

shareholders" following the success of the AT&T leasing company acquisition, which had been labelled "deal of the year" by *Institutional Investor* magazine. He explained: "We looked at last year and particularly in respect of the AT&T Capital deal and it justified making a special distribution."

Though Nomura confirmed the true scale of the payouts was

not reflected in the figures listed in the documents, Mr Hands declined to elaborate on the real figures. "It's commercially confidential," he said.

Mr Hands also declined to give details of the Gibraltar company, Graylands, or why it was entitled to benefit from the windfall. He continued: "Graylands is a private investment company, that's all I can say."

Nomura argued that Prideaux and Associates had given useful consultancy advice during the AT&T deal "on the management side and in selecting possible targets". Yet Mr Hands admitted most of the input had come from David Banks, one of Prideaux and Associates' three shareholders. Mr Banks has recently been appointed to the AT&T Capital board. The other

Prideaux and Associates shareholder, Allen Thomas, denied any involvement in the AT&T Capital deal.

It proved impossible to contact Mr Prideaux yesterday, although previous requests to discuss the payouts with him have been declined.

Companies House Research by Patrick Masters
Comment, page 25

Insurer plans to cut jobs by a third

Clifford Gorman

United Assurance, the product of last year's merger between Refuge Assurance and United Friendly, will cut its staff by a third, at the cost of 2,200 jobs, and close more than half its branches.

The cuts go deeper than the estimates made last August when it was expected that a quarter of the staff would go.

Some jobs would go through natural wastage, but there would be widespread redundancies, the chief executive, George Mack, admitted yesterday. The group is providing £27m to cover the cost of redundancies, which are expected to average around £15,000 a head. Closing branches, mostly small local offices, will cost an additional £7m.

Most of the cuts will be implemented before the end of the year, and the balance by the autumn of 1998, by which time the sales staff will be down to 4,200 from a peak of 6,400 in December 1995. Branch numbers will be cut from 279 to just 116.

The merged group will operate from the former Refuge head office in Wilmslow. The former United Friendly head office in Southwark, south London, will close by the end of the year and the first job relocations are taking place this month.

The group is also spending £42m to cover the cost of integrating the computer systems of the two companies, bringing total merger costs to an estimated £76m. Annual savings from the rationalisation are said to be around £37m, including £31m worth of salary costs. The move would pay for itself in two years, Mr Mack claimed.

He expects to harmonise the range of policies sold, and launch a range of products to appeal to the group's traditional clientele among families on less-than-average incomes.

Mr Mack wants to revamp the group's image, increase the value of policies sold and reduce the cost of sales. Sales staff will make greater use of palm-top mini-computers, and new sales methods will be considered.

Electronics giant looks at BSkyB stake

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

Shares in BSkyB jumped yesterday after a press conference in Tokyo in which Matsushita, the Japanese electronics giant that owns the Panasonic brand, appeared to suggest it was interested in taking a stake in the satellite broadcaster.

The story was fuelled by the fact that Matsushita is understood to have already entered into a partnership with BSkyB, BT and Midland Bank to create a joint venture, the Interactive Services Company, which

the small free float not held by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Granada and other founder investors, started moving after Matsushita told reporters it was talking with many European broadcasters about taking possible stakes, including BSkyB.

Yesterday BSkyB's shares closed 7.5p higher at 612p, having been 14.5p higher at one point.

Seinosuke Kuraku, who heads Matsushita's European division, said the company was seeking a broadcasting partner in each area of the European market and BSkyB was one candidate.

Matsushita is mainly interested in getting its television hardware into people's homes and sees an equity stake as the best way to get leverage in the competitive market.

Japan recently decided to launch terrestrial digital broadcasting as early as 2000, and analysts estimated that Japan's five terrestrial broadcasting stations, including their group firms, would spend about 1,000 billion yen (£5bn) to replace their studio-use equipment by 2000.

Matsushita currently holds a 15 per cent stake in DirectTV Japan, along with Mitsubishi Electric Corporation and US company Hughes Electronics. DirectTV will start beaming 100 channels later this year when it launches digital satellite broadcasting in Japan.

In Britain, there are plans to launch digital cable, digital satellite and terrestrial digital services by next year. BSkyB was planning to launch its satellite service at the end of this year, but the start of that service is thought to have been put back three months after a delay to the launch of the Astra satellite it will use.

BSkyB is also involved in one of the two consortia bidding to run digital terrestrial TV. Its partners in that venture are Carillon Communications and Granada.



Rupert Murdoch: His BSkyB shares have been volatile

the companies would use to subsidise the UK launch of digital television.

They are expected to spend up to £500m between them to cut the cost to subscribers of the set-top boxes that will be needed to unscramble signals and allow users to access interactive services such as home shopping.

Analysts admitted that BSkyB might need to raise finance to fund its share of the subsidy, which will cut the cost of boxes from the full retail price of about £400 to between £200 and £300. But they played down speculation that the company might want to issue shares to Matsushita to do so.

BSkyB's shares, which have been highly volatile thanks to

Growth in service sector races ahead

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The pace of growth in the service sector of the economy is picking up sharply, leading to skill shortages and upward pressure on pay. A new survey of purchasing managers working in services companies showed strength across the board, from financial and business services to hotels and restaurants.

Sales volumes on the high street also strengthened last month, according to a separate CBI survey of retailers. The biggest jumps were in footwear and clothing, possibly boosted by the early Easter holiday.

The surveys for March follow news earlier this week of a record £1.2bn increase in consumer credit in February.

"It's as we thought. Manufacturing is holding up well, and services are just ripping away,"

said James Barry, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

Even so, almost no City experts think Kenneth Clarke will raise interest rates after what could be his final monetary meeting with Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, next week. Any increase in the base rate would almost certainly trigger higher mortgage rates, and the Chancellor is thought unlikely to take that risk so close to the election.

The new purchasing managers' services survey aroused a lot of interest in the City, as the sector is covered by very few statistics despite its importance to the economy. The parallel purchasing managers' index for manufacturing has a strong track record as an early indicator of trends in industry.

The new indicators are harder to interpret, with figures going back only nine months and

some uncertainty about the normal seasonal fluctuations.

However, the figures indicated a rapidly rising level of activity, of new business and employment. They also showed that service sector companies are having to pay sharply higher salaries, although not yet passing these on in rising prices.

The activity index jumped from 60.4 in February to 63.3 in March, well above the 50 "boom-bust" watershed.

The index for new business rose from 60.9 to 62.4, and for employment from 56.8 to 57.6. Nearly 85 per cent of the companies surveyed expect business to pick up still further this year.



Glaxo shares ease on 'lethal drug' warning

Magnus Grimond

Shares in Glaxo Wellcome were hit yesterday after it emerged that the UK's biggest drugs company has been forced to issue a warning about the potentially lethal effects of one of its best-selling products.

Lamictal, an anti-epilepsy drug launched in Ireland in 1990, has been implicated in recent tests as the cause of a possibly fatal skin condition in children.

Following talks with the Food and Drug Agency in the US, Glaxo released yesterday that it had last week issued warnings to doctors of the increased risks and is sending out letters in the UK and the rest of the world where the product is licensed.

Glaxo's shares fell 20.5p at one stage yesterday, but later recovered to end just 6p lower at 1,087p. Analysts were relatively sanguine about the impact of the news on the group, despite the fact that Lamictal is one of the new products identified last month by Glaxo Wellcome chief executive Sir Richard Sykes to

take up the running from the best-selling Zantac anti-ulcer drug after key patents expire this year.

One follower said: "This will not have a big effect on earnings or the valuation of the company, but it will have an impact on drug sales."

Sales of Lamictal, market leader in the UK, jumped 64 per cent to £105m last year. Analysts were expecting that figure to grow to around £150m in 1997, rising to a peak of £250m by 2000. The figures compare with £834p for the whole group last year, including £193m for Zantac.

Although Lamictal is not yet registered for paediatric use in the US, the world's biggest drugs market, analysts said the under-16-year-old age group was a reasonably significant proportion of the market for the product. It has been licensed for use by children in 25 countries, including the UK from 1994. City projections of sales for the drug are therefore likely to be revised back.

The worries over Lamictal emerged after tests on the use

of the drug in children suffering from Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, an acute form of epilepsy which particularly affects children. That showed two out of the 79 children involved developed a serious skin reaction, which led the FDA to suggest the drug results in side-effects for between one in 50 and one in 100 users.

A Glaxo Wellcome spokesman said its own case studies using a wider range of data from around the world showed the incidence to be more like between one in 100 up to one in 300 who developed a reaction.

She admitted, however, that the problem appeared to be worse than in tests conducted before the product was originally licensed, when the incidence was similar to that in adults at one in 1,000 users. Problems can range from a mild skin rash to so-called toxic epidermal necrolysis, a serious skin condition akin to third-degree burns. Glaxo said there had been "a handful" of deaths among more than 800,000 people who have used Lamictal since its introduction.

38% rise for head of Zeneca

Magnus Grimond

Sir David Barnes, chief executive of Zeneca, saw his total pay jump 38 per cent to £898,000 last year. The rise rounds off a year of personal success for the executive head of Britain's third-biggest drugs group.

He also received a knight-hood "for services to the pharmaceutical industry" last year and saw Zeneca's profits exceed £1bn for the first time. Writing in the latest annual report, Sir Sydney Lipworth, chairman, said: "David has been tireless in his endeavours to develop Zeneca and his contribution to both the company and the industry has been profound."

Sir David's basic pay of £525,000 was supplemented by cash and share bonuses totalling £315,000 and a £46,000 pension contribution. His pay has some way to go yet to match that of Jan Leschly, his opposite number at rival drugs group SmithKline Beecham who saw his total emoluments rise 15 per cent to £252m last year.

Unipart staff share in £24m paper profit

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

More than 1,000 employees of the Unipart car components company are about to share in paper profits of almost £24m from the company's share option scheme, it emerged yesterday.

The staff all took part in the so-called Star Options scheme, launched by Unipart in 1994 and billed as "an executive style options programme available to all employees". It was created to encourage deeper employee involvement in the privately owned company.

From next month the 1,100 scheme members will be able to exercise options to buy some 20 million shares. Based on the last valuation of Unipart shares, carried out in 1996, each share will net a profit on paper of £1.19. Unipart shares are currently worth £2.30, compared with just 5p when the company was split off from Rover Group in 1987. The price is likely to increase significantly in another valuation later this year.

The 1,100 employees were allocated five share options for every one share they bought. The average allocation was 3,500 shares, giving each of the staff 17,500 options, netting paper gains of £20,825.

John Neill, chief executive, is the biggest beneficiary, though he insisted his application to buy shares had been scaled back more than other employees after the scheme was heavily oversubscribed.

Unipart said Mr Neill had been awarded 101,900 options giving profits on paper of £121,261. He said: "I was one of the trustees of the scheme and I was one of the most heavily scaled back."

Through Unipart's shares are not traded on the stock market, employees can sell them twice

yearly through an internal market. More than half the group's shares are owned by staff, with about 20 per cent held by Rover and rest with large institutional investors.

News of the payouts came as Unipart marked its tenth anniversary as an independent company by announcing a 17 per cent surge in sales last year to a record of £1.1bn.

"When we bought the business back in the 1980s people thought it wouldn't go on for more than two or three years," said Mr Neill.

Pre-tax profits increased by a smaller margin of 5 per cent, to £34.3m, largely because Unipart raised its investment spending last year. Investment this year could reach about £90m, after the group's move to form five new joint venture companies, three of which supply parts to Honda's UK manufacturing operations. The joint ventures are expected to create some 400 jobs, bolstering Unipart's 3,800-strong workforce.

Mr Neill again emphasised that Unipart's investment plans would have been restricted if the group was quoted on the stock market. A long-standing advocate of the concept of stakeholding, he went on: "We can afford to take a long-term view even if it hurts profits in the short term. If we were publicly quoted we would have to design counter measures to satisfy capital tourists who want to enter and exit the company at will."

However Unipart's philosophy stops short of encouraging trade union involvement. Earlier this week Mr Neill launched a scathing assault on the Labour Party's employment policies, which would effectively force plants to recognise unions if a majority of staff voted for it. He claimed they were "foolish" and "a step backward".

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei		Hang Seng		HSE 250	
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1997 High	1997 Low	1997 High	1997 Low	1997 High	1997 Low
FTSE 100	4248.10	+84.80	+1.5	4444.30	3822.30	3.80			
FTSE 250	4497.40	+78.80	+1.7	4729.40	4015.30	3.55			
FTSE 350	2095.20	+32.90	+1.6	2194.30	1818.60	3.75			
FTSE SmallCap	2280.31	+33.41	+1.4	2374.30	1954.08	3.04			
FTSE All-Share	2067.47	+32.33	+1.5	2163.94	1791.95	3.48			
New York	6580.30	+9.82	+0.1	7085.16	5032.94	1.89			
Tokyo	17689.59	+349.83	+1.9	22688.80	17303.65	0.89			
Hong Kong	12074.18	+481.13	+3.7	13868.24	10204.87	3.46			
Frankfurt	3285.85	+132.12	+3.5	3460.94	2283.36	1.50			

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gov		US long bond		Money Market Rates		Bond Yields	
Rate	1 Month	Rate	1 Year	Rate	10 Year	Rate	1 Year	Rate	10 Year
UK	6.00	7.00	7.71	8.18	7.72	8.28			
US	5.50	6.50	6.88	6.38	7.09	6.99			
Japan	0.50	0.50	2.28	1.75	-	-			
Germany	3.19	3.21	6.00	6.44	8.78	7.24			

CURRENCIES									
£/\$		£/DM		£/¥		Pound		Dollar	
Index	Yesterday	Index	Yesterday	Index	Yesterday	Index	Yesterday	Index	Yesterday
£/\$	1.6498	£/DM	0.6778	£/¥	162.82	£/\$	1.6498	£/DM	0.6778
\$/£	0.6068	DM/£	1.4754	¥/£	6.1460	\$/£	1.6498	DM/£	1.4754
DM/\$	0.6124	¥/\$	107.82	\$/DM	1.6170	DM/\$	0.6124	¥/\$	107.82
¥/\$	162.82	\$/¥	0.0062	¥/DM	162.82	¥/\$	162.82	\$/¥	0.0062

Statistics as at 24/4/97



COMMENT

'Already Mr Regan's supposed City backers are preparing to distance themselves from the young pretender. If he doesn't move soon, he'll be finished'

Three questions 'Chancer' Regan must answer

Here are three questions for Andrew 'Chancer' Regan, the man who would break up the Co-op. Where's the money going to come from, when, if ever, will he do anything (as opposed to talking about the prospect of doing something), and when, if ever, is the suspension going to be lifted from shares in Lanica Trust, the company ramped up on the back of this grandiose ambition.

The longer Mr Regan persists in refusing to answer these questions, the more his credibility declines. Already his supposed City backers are preparing to distance themselves from the young pretender. If he doesn't move soon, he'll be finished. The Co-operative Wholesale Society's annual meeting approaches and if Mr Regan really intends to take a tilt at the movement, he's presumably going to have to put some kind of resolution to this august assembly of worthy members. Neither Mr Regan nor Gallie, the Lanica subsidiary through which the assault is planned, are members, so he will have to find an ally to do it for him. Is there a traitor among the cloth caps?

And if there is, are members really prepared to abandon the movement to its fate and 'raid assets built up over 100 years or more?' as Terry Thomas, managing director of the Co-op Bank asked on Wednesday. Unfortunately for those who want the tradition defended, the answer to this latter question is of course they are, offered enough money. Assuming Mr Regan gets off the starting blocks, the movement will have

to do more than appeal to the altruism of members, overflowing though it no doubt is. If nothing else, Mr Regan has highlighted the huge unlocked potential and value of the Co-op. Hiding behind the Co-op's traditions is no longer an option; the movement must itself begin to think about how to unlock value, shake up management, bring about mergers, and focus the business on areas where its tradition still has something to offer. Indeed, were it not for the fact that Mr Regan is such an incredible bidder, he might have succeeded. As it is, it is hard to see how he's going to get anywhere.

Nobody really knows how serious his backing is but if it stretches no further than the likes of the racist Tory MP David Evans, then he's in trouble. With the movement rapidly closing ranks against him, he's lost the initiative and with the Labour Party now less than a month away from power, he's almost certainly lost the war as well. Hasn't Mr Regan heard? The 1980s are over.

Why City can ignore those party promises

There was about as much news for the markets in the Labour manifesto yesterday as there was in the Conservative one a day earlier - virtually none. These two important political documents caused not a ripple in the City, where analysts appear to be even more underwhelmed by the election cam-

paign than the population at large. One reason for this is the anodyne nature of the manifestos themselves, Labour's as much as that of the Tories. They are designed not to offend anybody and to be sufficiently vague in their commitments to allow maximum room for manoeuvre while actually in government. Their purpose is an entirely cynical one - to create the right corporate brand image for the political parties and to avoid as far as possible setting out detailed policies that mean something for the economy and business.

There is a more fundamental reason, too. The prospect of a Labour government no longer frightens financial markets so much because Labour has changed, but because traders know that the markets more than ever hold the upper hand.

If a Labour government - any government, anywhere - introduces policies that increased public sector borrowing unduly or ran excessive risks with inflation, the markets will penalise them promptly with higher long-term interest rates and/or a run on the currency. It has happened often enough that sensible politicians have absorbed the lesson. Macro-economic policies have the same shape across all parties and countries. Labour could introduce specific policies that will hit particular sectors of the stock market. The windfall tax is the obvious example. A minimum wage might also harm some companies in low-paying service industries like hotels and catering. Furthermore, investors might reasonably conclude that in

the longer term a Labour government would be more likely to take the UK into the single European currency. It might, despite its business-friendly new clothing, turn out to be less inclined to deregulate or more inclined to intervene than a Conservative government. But all these are marginal factors for the markets, are concerned. Now that New Labour has successfully jumped the key hurdle of convincing people it means what it says about fiscal and monetary responsibility, the City will not be unduly concerned about the shade of the next Government.

... and the strange case of Angel Trains

First there was Porterbrook, then there was Eversholt and now the strange case of Angel Trains. The first two of these rail privatisations were management buyouts, so it was always likely they would eventually enrich directors, even if the speed of the process was unexpectedly swift and the scale excessively large. But the third was a trade sale to the Japanese securities house Nomura. Even so, it now transpires, some of the rewards have rubbed off on the British Rail old guard. Through Pridemore and Associates, John Pridemore, former head of InterCity and one time pretender to the BR chairmanship, effectively owns 5 per cent of Angel. On the basis of deals already struck with Porterbrook

and Eversholt, this would make him an extremely wealthy man in the event of Angel being sold.

But it is not the purpose of this piece to pass judgement on the way privatisation has transformed so many former civil servants into wealthy men. Rather it is an old hobby horse - the extraordinary obfuscation of commercial life that prevents limited disclosure requirements allows to flourish. Corporate and commercial life remains one of the last great bastions of secrecy in an increasingly transparent and open world. As the story opposite shows, it is impossible to tell from the meaningless mumbo jumbo or filed company returns what's been happening here. Mr Pridemore seems to have received some kind of substantial windfall payment from Nomura. How much, and whether it has anything to do with Angel, the records do not show. Then there is the sudden guest appearance as an Angel shareholder of a Gibraltar registered company called Graylands.

These are private transactions and both Mr Pridemore and Nomura are perfectly entitled to refuse explanation. But if even top forensic accountants cannot decipher what's going on here, why is public money being spent on recording all this meaningless gobbledegook. It is fair enough for companies and financiers to hide what they are doing from competitors. All too often the purpose is to avoid tax and hide potentially embarrassing information from the public.

\$1.2bn BCCI fraudster faces 17 years

John Willcock

The biggest fraud trial in history ended in victory for the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) yesterday when Abbas Gokal, a Pakistani shipping magnate, was convicted of fraud involving \$1.2bn in loans from the corrupt Bank of Credit and Commerce International. Mr Gokal was a close friend of Hassan Abedi, the late founder of the BCCI, and he was its biggest single borrower before banking authorities shut BCCI down in 1992 after the discovery of \$20bn-worth of frauds.

Mr Gokal faces up to 17 years in jail, longer than the previous longest sentence for fraud in the UK, 10 years for

Peter Clowes, the Cheshire-based gifts fraudster.

Sentencing will wait until the beginning of next month, when the SFO will ask the trial judge, Mr Justice Burton, to make a confiscation order against Mr Gokal. Mr Gokal's family has over £100m in assets abroad which the SFO wants to use to refund victims of BCCI's crash, including thousands of individuals in the UK.

Chris Dickson, senior assistant director of the SFO and case controller of BCCI, was jubilant at the victory. In terms of BCCI, Gokal was not 'first division stuff, he was top of the Premier League stuff'.

With Mr Abedi dead and BCCI's

other main mastermind, Swaleh Naqvi, languishing in a Pennsylvania jail, Mr Gokal was 'the biggest fish we could catch', Mr Dickson added.

BCCI operated in 62 countries and left over 100,000 customers world-wide nursing hefty losses when it was closed. Mr Gokal conspired with senior BCCI officials in a \$1.2bn fraud. The SFO found documents signed by Mr Gokal in a London safe deposit box which showed that he and his two brothers owned and controlled the companies involved in the scam.

The Gokals owned the Gulf Group of companies, a shipping and trading empire based in Geneva with offices in over 40 countries.

The Gokals and BCCI knew that Gulf Group was hopelessly insolvent, but continued to lend it a total of \$1.2bn during the 1980s in unsecured loans.

When Price Waterhouse were appointed sole auditors of BCCI in 1987 Gokal embarked on a huge forgery campaign to fool them that the loans were to independent companies unconnected to Gulf Group.

This created a 'merry-go-round' of money between Gulf Group and BCCI, laundered through special conduit accounts at two New York banks, Security Pacific and French American. In this way over \$500m was stolen by BCCI senior management from the

account of Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi - who ironically was the majority shareholder in BCCI.

When the Bank of England and other supervisors overseas shut BCCI in 1992 Gokal fled from Switzerland to Pakistan - as did Mr Abedi. He was later arrested in Frankfurt and extradited to Britain.

There are many repercussions from Mr Gokal's conviction: more money for BCCI customers, more bad publicity for Price Waterhouse, BCCI's auditors, and a considerable boost for the SFO. This week it won another high-profile fraud trial, sending Brighton hotelier Robert Feld to jail for eight years.

There would be great trouble if our auditors or board got wind of the money you owe

Leadenhall Street, in the City, there was a 'special duties department'. Mr Hacking said: 'Its sole job was to administer fraudulent activities. False documents were created on a vast scale. There were secret meetings between Gokal and BCCI officials in which the fraud was planned. The SFO have recovered notes of these meetings. "Millions of dollars were flowing back and forth between Gokal's companies and BCCI. There were a large number of companies through which funds flowed. He misused ordinary employees like secretaries and clerks and duped them into signing false documents to deceive on a massive scale."

Gokal's brother-in-law, and former senior aide Abdul Chagla, described the problems faced by the Gulf Group and crucial meetings with BCCI officials. Chagla said: 'Most outsiders thought the Gokal brothers ran all the companies in the Gulf Group. But that was just conjecture. Abbas Gokal ran the business in every respect. He was the only one who took major decisions. He had total control of the Gulf Group companies. "In the 1980s the Gulf Group was having financial problems due to a downturn in the shipping business and by the failure of the group's non-shipping activities. There were already cash flow problems, but by 1984 things reached crisis point as various banks sought the repayment of loans."

Chagla told of meetings between Gokal and Agha Hasan Abedi to discuss 'increasing loans to pay off overdrafts'. They both allegedly agreed documentation of such deals would be non-factual. At a second meeting Abedi allegedly commented: 'There would be great trouble if our board or auditors got wind of the money you owe.'

At the BCCI headquarters at



Flamboyant: Billions in loans to Abbas Gokal contributed to BCCI's downfall

began in September 1996 the prosecution claimed Gokal, aged 60, and once a powerful player in world shipping was instrumental in fraudulently obtaining loans for his sailing empire which was suffering from cash flow problems.

Mr Anthony Hacking, QC, prosecuting told the jury Gokal personally paid out \$2m in bribes to BCCI officials to secure the cash line - loans no other banks would touch. When in 1991 the Bank of England be-

lately closed down BCCI, his business empire 'inevitably collapsed'.

Mr Hacking said: 'It was discovered that Gokal had borrowed \$1.2bn. He had not really got any security at all. It was an extraordinary situation. It was a major factor leading to the collapse of the BCCI bank.' Gokal had created a 'huge financial structure' to hide the truth of his fraudulent activities from the world.

The court heard there were

a huge number of documents which had been signed by Gokal that 'showed his knowledge and participation in the fraud'. The funds made illegally available to Gokal were distributed through his companies. And Mr Hacking added: 'The Crown says that Mr Gokal used vast sums of money he defrauded to sustain his lavish lifestyle around the world to provide personal benefit and gain for himself and his close family.'

At the BCCI headquarters at

Kim Sengupta on an intricate conspiracy that reads more like a thriller than a real-life scandal

Behind the collapse of a behemoth

The BCCI scandal was the result of a massive failure of the system. But if one man could be said to have played a key role in the spectacular collapse, it was Abbas Gokal.

The flamboyant shipping magnate was one of the most important customers in the short and tempestuous history of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International. So much so the bank lent him and his Gulf Shipping group \$1.2bn.

The money was lost, and BCCI's liquidators, Touche Ross, are suing Gokal, and his two brothers Mustapha and Murtaza. But it is Abbas who ended up in the dock of the Old Bailey in London charged with

York. He was said to have information about corrupt US politicians and officials, and wanted to strike a favourable plea-bargaining deal.

Mr Moscow wrote to Gokal's American lawyers, 'I have spoken with the prosecuting authorities in the United Kingdom. They tell me that they have no current plans to arrest Mr Gokal when he meets with us.' He was also at pains to point out that he had kept details of the meetings from the Serious Fraud Office in London.

On 18 July 1994 Gokal left for the US. Unknown to him the SFO had discovered his travel plans. It began extradition proceedings. During a stopover in Frankfurt he was hauled off the aircraft by the Federal German police at the request of the SFO and extradited to Britain.

Mr Moscow was said to be furious with the SFO, and denied any suggestion of collusion. Insiders at his office

said they were promised details by Gokal about people in power and their dealings with third world countries, drugs and arms dealing.

In London, Gokal was charged with six counts of fraud and false accounting. His alleged fellow conspirators included brothers Mustapha and Murtaza, Agha Hasan Abedi, the founder of BCCI, and Swaleh Naqvi, the bank's number two.

At the Old Bailey trial which

He duped workers into signing false documents on a massive scale

CU to bring back vote on report and accounts

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

Commercial Union performed an embarrassing volte-face yesterday, caving in to pressure from Pirc, the corporate governance consultancy, to reinstate a vote on its annual report and accounts.

The insurance group had

dropped the vote from the agenda of its annual meeting which is due to be held in London on 15 April.

In a letter to Pirc, CU's chairman, Nicholas Baring, promised to reintroduce the traditional vote at next year's annual meeting and said he would stand up at this year's meeting to put that intention on public record. He

stopped short of cancelling this year's meeting in order to change the agenda this time.

Anne Simpson, at Pirc, welcomed the decision: 'It is a good thing and should be accepted as such. We would like to see votes on more issues, not less. Mr Baring was very sorry and humble and we move on to the next issue.'

Although it is not a requirement of the Companies Act that there should be a vote on the annual report and accounts, few companies prevent their shareholders from casting their vote on one of the few general resolutions faced by a board of directors. GEC and Royal Bank of Scotland are among those companies that merely 'lay the

report before the shareholders' as required by the Act.

A year ago, Pirc had a similar run-in with British Aerospace, which used to remove the vote as a way of countering the high levels of protest it often faced at its annual meetings. Pirc succeeded in having that vote reinstated after a longer fight. There was confusion as to why

CU had chosen to drop the vote. Originally the move was attributed to the fact that many shareholders would receive only a summary report and would be unable to vote on the full version.

Yesterday Mr Baring blamed a legal drafting oversight. Commercial Union and British Aerospace share the same firm of solicitors, Linklaters.

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business

Ex-Blenheim boss bounces back with Cementone buy

Nigel Cope

Lawrie Lewis, the Monte Carlo-based millionaire who founded Blenheim Exhibitions, marked his return to the London stock market yesterday when he acquired a 29.9 per cent stake in Cementone, a tiny chemicals company.

It is Mr Lewis's first large corporate move since he sold out of Blenheim in 1991. It also comes just weeks after he

backed out of a consortium to buy Nottingham Forest football club at the last minute.

Speaking from Barcelona where his yacht is being re-fitted for next month's Monte Carlo Grand Prix, Mr Lewis said: "This is my first real day back at work since Blenheim five years ago. It's nice to be back in the driving seat."

Mr Lewis said he hoped to use Cementone as a vehicle to make acquisitions, which could

include a football club. "I won't rule that out as the Nottingham Forest situation gave me a flavour for it. But there are not many opportunities left in the Premiership."

He said the proposal to buy the stake in Cementone from Vijay Maliya, the Indian entrepreneur who runs UB International, came while he was in the midst of the Forest negotiations.

Mr Lewis said he hoped to be nominated to the Cementone board next week. He would consider opportunities in the exhibitions sector if the right deal was available. Other possibilities could be in the media and leisure sectors.

Shares in Cementone soared 30 per cent to 60.5p on the news.

Mr Lewis's return to the market follows similar recent moves by former Blenheim chairman Neville Buch. Earlier this week Mr Buch emerged as a 21.9 per



Monte Carlo rally: Lawrie Lewis said it felt good to be back in the driving seat with a big new acquisition

cent shareholder in Somic, a manufacturer of yarns and woven fabric. A few weeks previously he picked up a 29.9 stake in BBB, a small design firm he chairs. Mr Buch made £25m from the sale of Blenheim to United News & Media in the £600m deal last year.

Though Lawrie Lewis is resident in Monte Carlo it is thought he would like to spend more time here.

His interest in the Nottingham Forest takeover saga saw him briefly involved in two competing consortia bidding for control.

IN BRIEF

Kingfisher reshuffles B&Q board

Kingfisher, the retail group, yesterday announced management changes that see Jim Hodgkinson, the chief executive of the B&Q do-it-yourself chain, step up to become chairman of its DIY division. Martin Toogood, B&Q supercentre stores' director, becomes B&Q UK managing director while Bill Whiting, the warehouse stores director, is to become managing director of B&Q International. Roger Holmes, B&Q finance systems and supply chain director, is to replace Tony Percival as group finance director.

Senior Engineering to invest abroad

Underlying pre-tax profits at Senior Engineering rose by 38 per cent to £31.5m last year. However, headline pre-tax profits slumped to just £2.7m from £22.1m, dampened by disposal costs associated with the sale of the company's thermal engineering division, while profits from its engineering division fell to £8.4m. The total dividend was up from 3.6p to 3.82p. The company has earmarked £25m in 1997 for its investment and acquisition programme under new chief executive Andrew Parrish. Mr Parrish aims to expand operations in the Far East and Pacific Rim.

DTI accepts Go-Ahead undertakings

The Department of Trade and Industry has accepted undertakings from the Go-Ahead Group over bus services in the North-east of England. In August 1995 the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) made recommendations about Go-Ahead after finding its operation of additional services to have been against the public interest. The MMC said the timetable of Go-Ahead's services close to those of its competitors was predatory and likely to damage competition in the long run.

BAe and Vickers join forces

British Aerospace, Vickers and Lockheed Martin, the US aircraft maker, said they would bid for a new US and British army scout car and reconnaissance vehicle. A spokesman for Lockheed said the deal was worth a potential £5bn if the US and British armies ordered what they said they needed.

Chelsea in deal to develop land

Chelsea Village, owners of Chelsea Football Club, said it had concluded a £12m financing arrangement with MeesPierson and National Westminster to develop land around the Premier League club's Stamford Bridge stadium in west London.

Littlewoods plans to sell stores in Russia

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Littlewoods is to sell its retail operations in Russia and India to concentrate on its home shopping and football pools interests.

The Liverpool-based group, which is being overhauled by the chief executive, James Ross, has already put its UK stores up for sale and last week resumed talks to buy the Freemans mail order business from Sears.

The international division includes four stores in St Petersburg and one in Bangalore which opened only a year ago. Littlewoods has a further 10 franchise outlets in Russia.

Mike Wynne, managing director of Littlewoods International, said: "Despite difficult trading conditions, the stores in Russia and India have produced encouraging sales. However, the businesses have reached a stage where further substantial investment was re-

quired to take the business forward."

Littlewoods started trading in Russia in 1991. The stores employ 320 in Russia and 120 in India. Littlewoods International, which includes the group's sourcing operations as well as the overseas stores, recorded a loss of £7.2m last year compared to a loss of £11.5m in 1995. Last year's sales were £11m.



Overhaul: James Ross back in talks to buy Freemans

Littlewoods said it had spoken to "one or two" interested parties about the stores.

The company is still in discussions with Sears about the Freemans deal after initial talks collapsed. The company said it hoped to receive notification from the Office of Fair Trading before the election on whether or not the deal would be referred to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission.

Separately, Otto Versand, the German retail group which owns the Grattan mail order business, yesterday denied reports it was planning to launch a £1.7bn break-apart for Sears. The company said it was not planning such a move, though it remained interested in acquiring the Freemans business under conditions offered last year. Reports had suggested Otto Versand was planning a 110p per share bid for the whole of Sears as a way of gaining control of Freemans. Sears shares closed 1p higher at 74p.

Thomson-CSF bid decision hinges on national security

John Lichfield
Paris

The French finance minister, Jean Arthuis, said yesterday that "national security" would be one of the factors which shaped his government's decision on the sale of its majority share in the military electronics company Thomson-CSF.

But Mr Arthuis refused to comment on reports that the British electronics giant GEC had tabled a preliminary bid for the company, part of the French state-owned electronics conglomerate Thomson SA.

The French government has let it be known that it sees the fate of Thomson as part of a broader restructuring of the country's military-industrial complex.

Mr Arthuis said yesterday that the government's decision on the final bids, to be made by 7 May, would be shaped by the "credibility of the candidates... their capacity to carry through their plans" and "factors related to national security".

The minister said Paris would declare which bidders had been admitted to the second, detailed stage of the auction by Monday at the latest.

A senior executive of one of the two French defence groups known to be in the bidding confirmed, however, that GEC

had also thrown its hat into the ring.

Noel Forgeard, president and chief executive of Matra High Technologies, part of the Lagardere group, said the GEC had given advance warning of its bid.

He said Lagardere did not regard this as an unfriendly act by GEC, with which it shares the ownership of the Matra Marconi defence and satellite electronics company.

His comments furthered speculation that the GEC move was an more than a tactical ploy, and was mostly intended to place a marker for the British company's continued interest in alliances and joint ventures with the French industry.

British Aerospace, GEC's great rival, has indicated its support for the Thomson bid by Lagardere, with which it also has a joint venture.

The other French bidder is the space and telecoms company Alcatel Alsthom, in conjunction with the plane-maker Dassault.

But Lagardere was the chosen saviour for Thomson-CSF in the French government's first attempt to privatise the entire Thomson group, which was rejected by the official privatisation watchdog in December.

The French government owns 53.2 per cent of the shares of Thomson-CSF, a stake valued at £1.3bn.

IMI buys radiator valve firm for £97m

Magnus Grimold

IMI, the Birmingham-based engineering group, yesterday continued its recent buying spree with the £97m acquisition of Tour & Anderson Hydro-nics, a leading Swedish manufacturer of heating valves.

The deal is the biggest since IMI paid £130m for of Heimeier, Germany's highest manufacturer of thermostatic radiator valves, at the beginning of last year. It takes the total spend on acquisitions over the last 15 months to £360m.

IMI said adding T&A to Heimeier and its other building products operations would give it control over 20 per cent of the world market for heating valves and fittings, and an even bigger share in Scandinavia.

Gary Allen, the chief executive, said: "IMI has stringent acquisition criteria and this is another acquisition which fits superbly with those criteria."

The Swedish company, which is being acquired for cash from Incentive Group, part of the wealthy Wallenberg family empire, was a rival bidder for Heimeier, and the deal would not have made sense had IMI not bought the German company, Mr Allen said.

The company in effect created the market for so-called "balancing valves", which regulate the temperature in heating and cooling systems, after developing and introducing the product in 1963.

Last year it made pre-tax profits of £9.4m on turnover of £57m, giving an eight per cent earnings ratio of 14, IMI said.

The group's shares added 10p to 387p yesterday as analysts estimated it would add £3m to profits after financing costs in a full year. Michael Blogg of Charterhouse Tilney described it as "quite neat. Financially it stacks up."

IMI's pro forma year-end gearing would rise 35 points to 46 per cent after the latest deal, but with interest cover "well into the teens" it did not rule out further acquisitions.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Diversified products work for Laird

Laird's formula in recent years has been to reduce its dependence on the auto industry, while maintaining investment levels in its three business legs: control around sealing systems, security hardware and computer boxes. And while it looks dangerously like a conglomerate, the record shows the strategy has worked.

Headline pre-tax profits only crept ahead by £500,000 to £66.6m in the year to December and even they were flattened by acquisitions made in the last two years - principally the Cego window hardware operation - which together chipped in an additional £2.7m. But the bald figures had some decent levels of growth. After a disappointing first quarter, business picked up from the end of March and profits rose 18 per cent in the second half.

Non-automotive operations led the way. Under a quarter of the business five years ago, these now represent over half the turnover after a very respectable growth rate of 25 per cent last year. The specialist packaging to Fullarton computer boxes division raised profits by 23 per cent to £21.7m after a record year. And even if growth in the computer industry slowed, Fullarton is prospering as its big customers Compaq and IBM outsource more value-added assembly to suppliers.

Industrial products, which saw profits grow from £27.6m to £31.4m, was boosted by acquisitions and as one of the leading security products suppliers in the UK should benefit from the building upturn. But the main story at Laird is still car-related. Sealing systems, one of the biggest suppliers of weather seals to the European auto industry, was hit by £1.8m start-up costs for its new plant in North Carolina and competitive conditions in Germany. Profits slumped £4.9m to £21.2m as a result.

The figures demonstrated the importance of new models, both for manufacturers and suppliers. Laird was dragged down by the relatively poorly performing Volkswagen Golf and General Motors Astra in 1996, while further start-up costs of perhaps double last year will make 1997 unexciting, but next year may prove more interesting.

Volumes from North Carolina will start building from the first quarter and Laird will be gearing up production for a slew of new car launches in 1998 and beyond, including a GM model, the new Escort, the new VW Beetle "concept model" and a BMW to be produced in North Carolina.

Currency will knock at least £5m off the bottom line at these levels, but Albert E Sharp thinks profits of £73m this year will rise to £83m next. That puts the shares, on a 44.5p to 38p yesterday, on a forward p/e of 11, dropping to 10. Reasonable value.

Dagenham Motors ahead

No surprise about Dagenham Motors' figures yesterday. The company put out a statement in February warning analysts that they had taken too gloomy a view after disastrous half-year figures and pointing to full-year profits about the same as last year's £5.1m.

In fact, Dagenham just beat 1995's result with £5.12m pre-tax after a 9 per cent increase in turnover to £291.9m. After a higher tax charge, earnings per share slipped a touch to 13.6p (14.4p) and a same again 5.5p made for an unchanged full-year dividend of 7.7p.

Dagenham has - been

through a turbulent time as its main franchise, Ford, lost market share and cost cutting failed to keep pace. All that changed in the second half, with a 5 per cent reduction in the company's headcount and other efficiency savings leading to a strong final quarter.

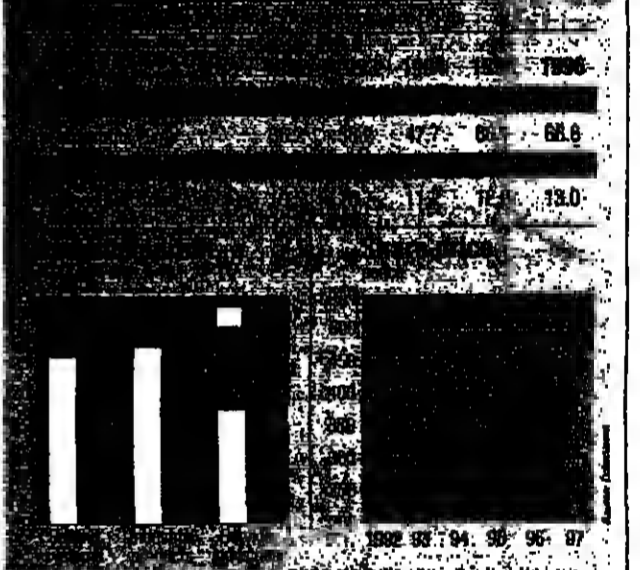
So far this year, trading appears to have improved, with sales of new cars boosted by the introduction at the end of 1996 of the distinctive little Ka and the Explorer 4x4 models. For the ninth year in a row, Ford took the top three places in the best sellers list with its Escort, Fiesta and Mondeo.

Used cars performed well with profits rising by 13 per cent and exceeding the return from new cars for the first time, while sales and profits from new commercial vehicles rose substantially.

The biggest boost for Dagenham, however, has come from Ford's decision to focus on fewer, larger dealerships and to unwind its archaic rules forbidding ownership of adjacent sales territories. The real beneficiaries from this will be the larger players like Dagenham with a strong relationship with the manufacturer.

On the basis of forecast profits this year of £5.5m, the shares trade on a prospective p/e ratio of 7 and there is plenty of support from a yield of almost 10 per cent. Dagenham has had its problems but this seems quite an anomaly. Buy.

Laird: at a glance



United Assurance targets costs

United Assurance Group, the product of last year's merger of Refuge Assurance and United Friendly, made an exceptional net profit of £386m before tax out of the merger last year, but the profit on continuing activities was £194m compared with combined profits of £164m for the two partners in 1995. Most of the money came from long-term investment returns and transfers. General business was marginally profitable at best.

Shareholders get an 18p share dividend, 35 per cent more than in 1995, but including exceptional losses on discontinued business earnings per share only rose from 36p to 36.1p, and new business premiums rose by a bare 2 per cent. The merger presents an opportunity and a challenge to shake off a lack-lustre image.

Group chief executive George Mack and

finance director Bill McDonald have lost no time in drawing up plans to close half the branches, making a third of the staff redundant, before the end of the year.

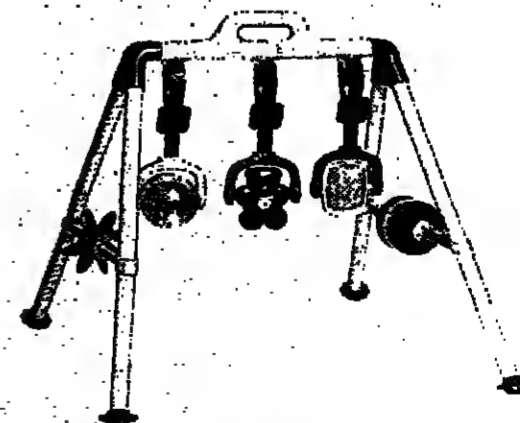
The next step is to cut costs and increase sales per head to compete with the new wave of policies backed by heavy advertising and sold over the telephone.

The traditional market has been among families with below average incomes. It is a huge market with an urgent need for more financial products, but one where individual policies tend to be small and the costs of selling and servicing them are above average, especially as Mr Mack insists that United will continue to offer advice on the suitability of its products. New products and new methods are promised in 1998. The shares rose 12p to 486p, but for the investor it is a leap of faith.

Woolworths Product Recall Notice

Chad Valley Activity Play Gym (£9.99)

Item Code: 304V1570



Woolworths has learned of a potential problem with its Chad Valley Activity Play Gym which could cause the product to collapse unexpectedly. In the interests of customer safety and as a precautionary measure, the Chad Valley Activity Play Gym has been withdrawn from sale in all Woolworths stores.

Any customer who has purchased this product since August 1995 should return it to their nearest store where a full refund will be given. A receipt is not necessary.

WOOLWORTHS

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لقد كنت من الأفضل

market report / shares

Taking Stock

Utilities generate a more positive mood in London

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Data Bank

FTSE 100	4214.6	-22.0
FTSE 250	4504.6	-2.7
FTSE 350	2082.8	-8.9
SEAQ VOLUME	806.3m shares	
70,662 bargains		
Glits Index	93.4	-0.12



Utilities, although under threat of a windfall tax and likely to suffer more than most from any change of Government, helped the stock market resist the latest round of American jitters.

National Power and PowerGen were comfortably the best performing blue chips and Severn Trent and Thames Water waded in with important contributions.

With the Labour manifesto free from any unpleasant surprises and a suspicion arising in some quarters the party's policies could eventually be beneficial to the generators NP gained 17.5p to 496.5p and PG 16.5p to 608.5p.

The power giants were helped by favourable comments from investment houses, Credit Lyonnais Laing and Pannure Gordon.

Severn Trent rose 11p to 698.5p and Thames 6.5p to 666.5p.

The rest of the market had another downbeat session although Footsie's retreat was a relatively modest 22 points to 4,214.6. Tax deals again prompted much of the dealing.

There was little incentive for investors, big and small, to take new positions in the dying gasps of the tax year and with the key but unpredictable US non-farm payroll figures due today.

On a number of occasions the US statistics have provoked volatile market gyrations. With New York on tenterhooks over interest rates the scene could be set for another dramatic sell-off certainly Wall Street is in no mood for any more armistice.

Although the election has yet to have much impact on general market sentiment, Footsie has fallen on nine of the 12 days since John Major's call to the polls, losing more than 200 points.

Rolls-Royce, a privatised group but in no danger of a windfall tax, was another high flyer, climbing 5p to 237p. It is thought to be near to clinching a deal to sell its steam power units, with a German group rumoured to have made what many would regard as a generous offer.

BSkyB, up 7.5p to 612p, responded to talk of Matsushita of Japan taking a stake and Rank improved 9p to 436.5p on renewed speculation it would soon sell its remaining 20 per cent interest in the Xerox office equipment operation.

BOC, the chemical group, was another resisting the

downward pull, as its big American rival, Praxair, raised its carbon dioxide and hydrogen prices. The shares rose 8p to 940.5p.

Oils were unsettled by a further sharp decline in the crude price; the mild weather is a big influence. British Petroleum fell 12.5p to 683.5p and Shell 13p to 1,041.5p. Enterprise Oil tumbled 22p to 615.5p and Lamsa 10.5p to 224.5p.

Restaurants, off another 12.5p to 576.5p, and SmithKline Beecham, 19.5p to 849p, were casualties of Wall Street and Glaxo Wellcome was trimmed 6p to 1,087p on its dear doctor letter warning about side

effects of its Lamictal epilepsy drug.

SBC Warburg caution was said to be responsible for a 9.5p decline to 666.5p by Scottish & Newcastle and British Aerospace was lowered 16p to 1,346p as its chances of a significant involvement in the Thomson-CSF sale dimmed following the General Electric Co intervention.

In busy trading Sears firmed to 74p on talk of a break up bid, possibly from Germany.

Results lifted engineer Laird 44.5p to 389p and computer group Sema gave up 38.5p to 1,301.5p as the French electrical group Schneider, sold its 5.1 per cent stake at 1,295p.

Artists, the holidays group, fell 35p to 923.5p as the US Carnival Corporation denied plans to lift its 29.6 per cent stake.

AH Ball, a building group, slumped 7p to 25.5p after a profit warning and Cemstone,

the paint business, gained 13.5p to 60p as entrepreneur Laurie Lewis acquired just under 30 per cent; a reverse takeover deal looks likely.

On Demand Information overcame its apparent surprise about talk of an upbeat statement, disclosing a link with United News & Media; the shares added 2.5p to 45p.

Rugby Estates, once part of Hillsdown Holdings, was little changed at 133.5p after achieving a 125 per cent profit advance to £2.4m. BZW believe profits will reach £2.7m this year with NAV moving to 181p. Analyst Alan Carter says Rugby's strong management should come into its own as the property market improves.

Newcomer Harvey Nash, an IT recruitment business, traded at 180.5p from a 175p placing. Melrose, the oil group held at 20.5p, as 54.7 per cent of its offering in its Sibir offshoot was taken up.

[Professor Richard Courroy, former head of Arcom International Resources, is planning to bring a fledgling Irish gold company to the fringe Offer share market. Courroy Diamond and Gold has a gold prospect at Clonshire, County Monaghan, on which up to a 100 hole drilling programme is planned. Arcom discovered the Galway zinc-lead mine, which recently came into production, in County Galway 11 years ago.]

[Note the continuing strength of Matheson Lloyd's, one of the obscure breed of insurance investment trusts. The shares rose 4.5p to a 125.5p peak they have risen from 100p last month and 81p a year ago. Take over talk is behind the move. Goshawk Insurance and Benfield & Rae are regarded as likely predators.]

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: 7 Ex rights; 8 Ex dividend; 9 Ex all; 10 Unlisted Securities Market; 11 Suspended; 12 Partly Paid; 13 Nil Paid Shares; 14 AM Stock. Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

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FTSE 100 - Real-time	00	Starting Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	38
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Yield Market	21	High Street Banks	41

Anyone with a land-line telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0800 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 573 4378 800am - 600pm.

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
British Steel	280,000	BP	100,000	National Grid	70,000	Barclays	50,000
Shell	200,000	United Utilities	100,000	BT	50,000	BT	50,000
BT	100,000	ASDA Group	50,000	Rank Group	50,000	Dixons	50,000
Pluricon	100,000	Seacrest	50,000	ICI	50,000	SmithKline Beecham	50,000
Caritas	20,000	BT	50,000	Lloyds	50,000	BT	50,000

FTSE 100 index hour by hour

Open 4213.3 down 23.3	11.00 4212.2 down 13.4	14.00 4210.8 down 5.8
06.00 4213.7 down 19.3	12.00 4223.5 down 13.1	15.00 4225.5 down 1.1
10.00 4214.5 down 22.1	13.00 4233.2 down 3.4	16.00 4228.8 down 6.8
		Close 4214.6 down 22.0

Stock	Price	Change	Stock	Price	Change
British Steel	280.00	-0.36	British Airways	440.00	-0.45
Shell	200.00	-0.50	BT	50.00	-0.10
BT	100.00	-0.10	Dixons	50.00	-0.10
Pluricon	100.00	-0.10	SmithKline Beecham	50.00	-0.10
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100

Beleaguered Bre-X faces blizzard of legal claims

[illegible]

Singspiel on top of world

...talking the tree

sport

COCA-COLA CUP FINAL: An American goalkeeper is hoping to go one better than Banks and Shilton. Phil Shaw reports

Zap! Pow! Here comes Kasey Kellerman!

Holy shit! exclaims the goalkeeper as a shot from his coach clips a divot on the pitch and rears over his diving body before nestling in the net. The oath owes more to Gotham City than Leicester City, for we are watching the Premiership's only American at work.

Kasey Keller is preparing to play the game of his life. In every sense. Sunday's Coca-Cola Cup final between Leicester and Middlesbrough will not only be his debut at Wembley, but a chance to add one of the English game's top honours (albeit in a competition with a quintessentially American name) to his haul from collegiate football in the United States.

A perfectionist streak compels him to swoop around the practice pitch like some caped superhero long after his team-mates have showered, eaten and left. Gordon Banks and Peter Shilton, his last two predecessors in national finals for Leices-

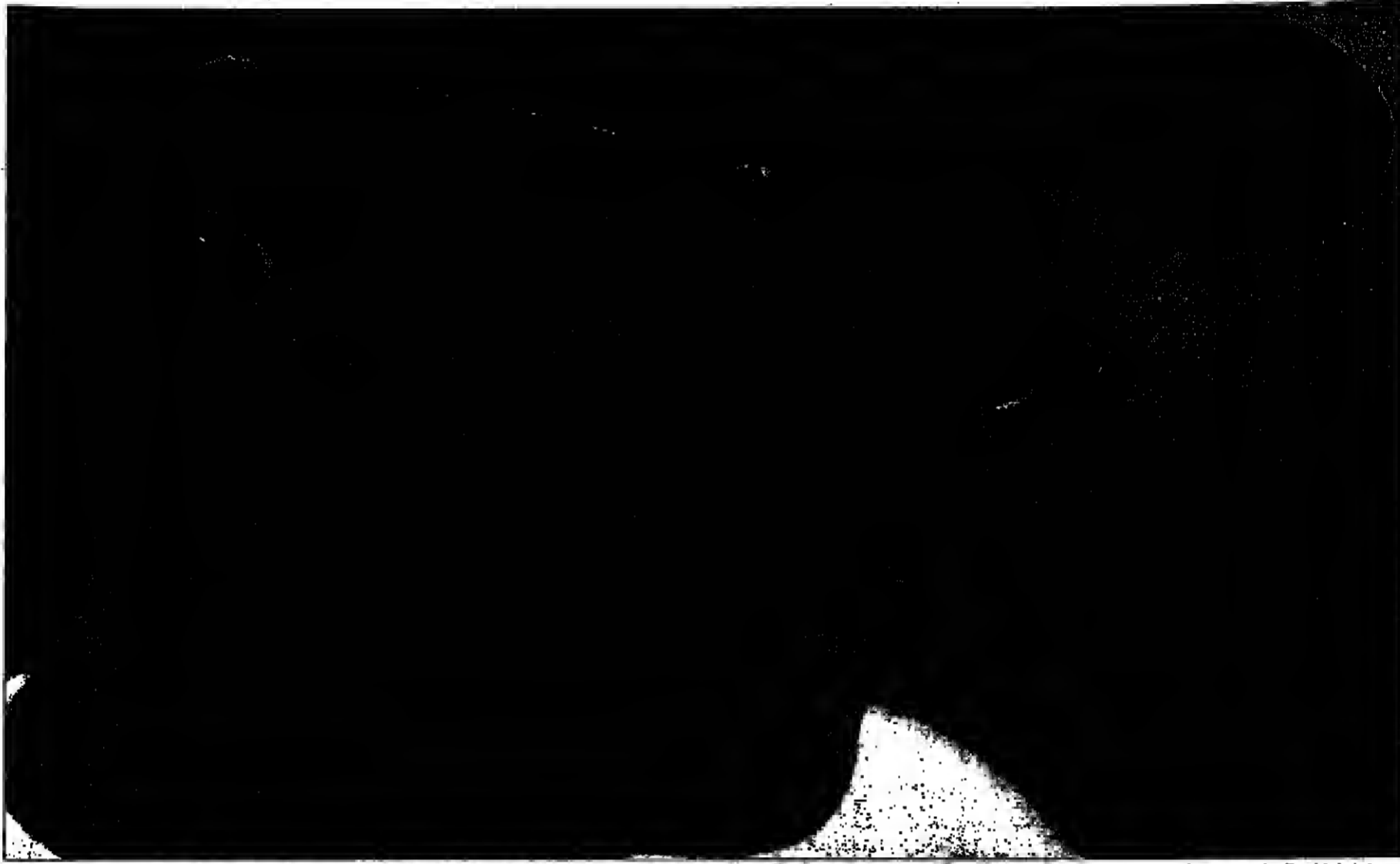
'I don't think anyone in Leicester would pretend they are not a little surprised'

ter, were also renowned for their single-mindedness, but life is more complicated for Keller.

The keeper caught in two minds is normally about as welcome as the right-back with two left feet. Yet in a club-versus-country controversy with a twist, the 27-year-old from Washington State is proving an exception.

Keller began the season with a dual ambition. His immediate aim was to establish himself and his new club, Leicester, among the elite. The second, but by no means secondary, part was to become first-choice keeper for the US in time to play in the World Cup finals next year.

His success on both fronts means he has spent almost as many hours crossing the Atlantic as he has between the posts. In November, for example, he flew back from Port of Spain, having kept a clean sheet against Trinidad and Tobago. The following night, after convincing Martin O'Neill that he was not suffering from jet lag, he kept another against Manchester United.



Kasey Keller looked in a studious mood yesterday as he prepared to play the game of his life for Leicester at Wembley on Sunday

Photograph: David Ashdown

In a fortnight's time, on the day after Leicester visit Chelsea and four days after a possible replay against Middlesbrough, Keller is due in New England for the sell-out meeting of the US and Mexico.

In between his absences, he has seized the opportunity offered by a £900,000 move from Millwall with some brilliant displays, none better than in the second leg of the semi-final with Wimbledon. His Wembley place is assured, even though he missed four of Leicester's last seven matches while on duty against Jamaica, Canada and Costa Rica.

"The two things have come into more than slight conflict," Keller said. "At Millwall I made fairly rare ap-

pearances for the national team. It was frustrating but at least I could concentrate on getting myself ready to play for the US when the chance came.

"Unfortunately my first season in the Premiership has coincided with a ridiculous World Cup schedule. I'm a neutral in a sense, with no choice in the matter. Fifa [the governing body of world football] has made it mandatory that if the national team want you, that's where you have to be."

The knowledge that Leicester's experienced back-up keepers, Kevin Poole and Ian Andrews, naturally covet his place has deepened Keller's interest in flight timetables. Com-

petition to be national No 1 is also intense, with QPR's Jürgen Sommer, Luton's Jan Feuer, Galatasaray's Brad Friedel and Mark Dodd, of Dallas Burn, all vying for the jersey.

Keller proffers a simple explanation for this preponderance of accomplished custodians. "In most American sports you use your hands. Tony Meola [US keeper in the last two World Cups] was a baseball player before coming to soccer. My dad was too. I was a big fan of the Seattle SuperSonics basketball team and the Seahawks in American football."

"I started playing soccer at the age of six or seven. We were driving by some fields and I saw some kids kick-

ing a ball about. I asked my mom to find me a team and that was it."

The first "proper" keeper he recalls seeing on television was Harald Schumacher during the 1982 World Cup. Perhaps the German's attempted decapitation of France's Patrick Battiston caught his imagination? "Exactly! As an American, did you kind of liked that. It reminded you of American football."

At the University of Portland in Oregon he majored in soccer and sociology. In a city with no pro football or baseball, the college side attracted big crowds and media attention. Keller admits, however, that the 20-year-old student was "nowhere near ready" to play at Italia '90.

In the event, he stayed on the bench, but his sporting education continued when Bruce Rioch brought him to Millwall five days after his last college game. He spent 18 months at the old Den ("My wife found it a little surprising, kinda crazy"), staying after the Lions moved home. Relegation and the gathering financial storm prompted his sale last summer.

"I was a bit apprehensive when Leicester came in. After all, they'd gone straight back down barely a year earlier. But after meeting the manager I felt positive about the situation. What's happened since has confirmed that."

"I don't think anyone in Leices-

ter would pretend they're not a little surprised by how well we've done. The management have done well in improving the squad. You get into Europe by winning on Sunday and staying up would only bring more money and talent in. It's an avalanche effect - hard to stop once it starts rolling - though sadly it also works in the opposite direction, as Millwall are finding out."

Keller has discovered two major differences at the higher level. While the players are not necessarily quicker, there are "sudden, explosive bursts of activity" and, crucially, they move the ball around faster.

The atmosphere, too, is "a great buzz", both in comparison with the First Division and the games he grew up with. "American sports tend to be very stop-start, so you get eruptions of sound and then everyone's sitting quietly again."

Much as he appreciates the significance of Wembley in the lore of English football, the twin towers hold

'I've played at the Maracana in Brazil with 90,000 spectators and also at 7,000 feet'

no terrors. "I've played at the Maracana in Brazil with 90,000 spectators, also at 7,000 feet and in the snow before 120,000 screaming Mexicans in the Azteca. So it won't be a problem for me."

He is delighted, none the less, by the thought of being the first "real American", as he puts it, with his tongue almost poking through his cheek, to play in a major final at the famous stadium. John Harkes, his friend and colleague in the US team, figured in three (winning once), but although Keller describes him as "all-American", the former Sheffield Wednesday midfielder holds a British passport.

Banks and Shilton finished as losers. Keller, while respectfully wary of Boro's dynamic duo, Juninho and Fabrizio Ravanelli, is confident he will not suffer the same unholy fate. Judging by his contempt for gravity on the training ground, as well as a lifestyle that brings a new meaning to the cliché of the keeper flying through the air, it may take a bobbie to beat him.

Mexico

Only a game? Not likely, and especially not when it's a friendly. Tuesday's match between Jamaica's national team and a Mexican First Division side ended in a pitched battle that forced the referee to scrap the game.

Several Mexican players were injured when members of Toris Neza and the Jamaican squad punched and kicked each other for five minutes during the match. Several Jamaican players then stormed off the field and returned waving bricks and broken glass.

Jamaica were leading Toris Neza 1-0 in the 19th minute when a Jamaican midfielder slid into Toris' Argentinian-born German Arango. He got to his feet and punched the Jamaican and an all-out fight ensued.

"That is not normal behaviour. It isn't possible that they react like this in a friendly," a Neza striker, said, but Jamaica's coach, Rene Simoes, defended his players, saying they lacked international experience. So presumably it's all right at home then.



AROUND THE WORLD

France

French players are to be given the same tax status as film stars in a drive to halt their emigration to lower-tax countries.

Alarmed by the exodus in recent years of more than 40 top players including Eric Cantona and David Ginola, the government has approved a bill to give clubs relief on payroll taxes for professional players.

Now 80 per cent of players' earnings will be considered to be royalties for the use of their image rather than a salary, and thus not subject to employers' social

security levies which are about 55 per cent of gross pay. However, no mention was made of the fact that players will still be keen to move countries because of the massive signing-on fees they can now receive following the Bosman ruling.

Italy

An Italian amateur player who had two teeth broken in a goal-mouth clash and was sent off for protesting about the foul got even shorter shrift on Wednesday when he took his case to a judge.

The court in the north-west town of Aceta took just three minutes to rule that the foul on Stefano Gioppo did not constitute a crime. It threw out a charge of grievous bodily harm and a damages suit against Adriano Ferruca, whom Gioppo had reported to prosecutors.

Gioppo's team, Hone Arand, fared about as well as their player. They lost the match to Lega Dora Burolo 7-0.

Catherine Riley

Stakes being raised

Non-League Notebook

RUPERT METCALF

Both a place in the Football League and a trip to Wembley are at stake in this weekend's top non-League games, with the FA Umbro Trophy semi-final first-leg games sharing top billing with a Cheshire derby which will have a big say in the destination of the GM Vauxhall Conference title.

The three teams in contention for the Conference championship all dropped points over Easter, after which Macclesfield Town were in pole position with a three-point lead and a game in hand over second-placed Kidderminster Harriers. The champions, Stevenage Borough, are still in the race in third place, 10 points behind Macclesfield but with three games in hand.

Tomorrow Sammy McIlroy's Macclesfield side entertain their Cheshire rivals, Altrincham, at Moss Rose after seeing their run of eight successive wins come to an emphatic end on Monday, when they lost 4-1 at Hednesford Town. It was the first time they had conceded four goals in a game since December 1995.

Kidderminster, who gained only one point over Easter, are without a game tomorrow while Stevenage take a break from league action to visit Woking, who will be without their injured forward Clive Walker, for their Trophy semi-final first leg.

In the other semi-final, Dagenham & Redbridge of the Isthmian League entertain Dr Martens League side Gloucester City, who are managed by former West Ham forward Leroy Rosenior. So, for the first time since 1990, a club outside the Conference will reach the Trophy final.

The last 100 per cent record in the non-League pyramid ended on Wednesday when Tiverton Town drew 2-2 at Taunton Town. This season's first game between the top two sides in the Southern League (Western) League attracted a crowd of 1,196, who saw Phil Everett score his second goal late on to at least preserve Tivty's unbeaten run. Richard Hancock struck both goals for Taunton.

Prior to Wednesday, Tiverton had won all 26 of their league games. They lead Taunton by eight points and have three games in hand, so the title is still well within their reach.

Brown remains wary

Craig Brown found himself yesterday in the unaccustomed position, for a Scotland manager, of having to warn against premature triumphalism.

A great night for the Scots' World Cup prospects did not mean it was goodnight Vienna for Austria, their victims in Glasgow, or indeed for Sweden.

Aware that Scottish sides tend to function better as underdogs, Brown was at pains to point out that Austria still have the edge in one respect. Their most arduous remaining fixture in Group Four, against the Swedes in September, is at home.

Scotland's, which is also against a Sweden team that Brown has described as the best in the section, comes in Gothenburg at the end of this month.

"We're not there yet," Brown said. "I'm being sensible because the group is distorted by our having played more games. But if we go to Sweden and win, then I'll say we can only throw it away. I don't see us letting our fans down at home to Latvia and Belarus, though we have a tricky match in Belarus on 8 June."

How quickly, how completely, the mood surrounding the national side has changed. Seven weeks after they were jeered off in Monaco following the barren draw with Estonia, their captain, Gary McAllister, was moved to declare Wednesday's

performance as "as good teamwork as I've ever played with Scotland".

In terms of passion, on the pitch and in the stands, Brown likened it to another epic 2-0 success, over France at Hampden Park eight years ago, which proved decisive in taking Andy Roxburgh's squad through to Italy. Fervour we expect; but Brown went on to claim that his Scotland had also developed a more Continental style.

Those who witnessed the 100mph, hit-and-hope, fiasco of Monte Carlo would have had trouble taking such a suggestion seriously prior to last weekend's win over the Estonians at Kilmarnock. Seeing, however, was believing, and the technique shown particularly by John Collins and Paul Lambert, who play in France and Germany respectively, meant it was also a bad night for the Eurosceptics.

Collins, who had a decent Euro '96 before leaving Celtic for Monaco, is well known beyond Scotland; Lambert less so. Since joining Borussia Dortmund from Motherwell last summer the 27-year-old midfielder has gained a reputation as a holding player, adept at the kind of

man-marking that negated the vaunted Andreas Herzog.

More pertinently to Brown's "European" emphasis on possession, playing with Matthias Sammer and Andreas Möller has helped Lambert become a more constructive passer. "I've been transformed since I went to the Bundesliga - I think I've played one long ball since I signed," he said.

"If you give the ball away your team-mates look at you as if you're a criminal. It's considered the ultimate sin, and even when you do it in training you can expect a rollicking."

Other significant successes included the front pair, Darren Jackson and the two-goal Kevin Gallacher. Their pace, strength and instinctive understanding prompted the manager to compare them favourably with the Scots' last genuine attacking partnership, between Ally McCoist and Maurice Johnston.

Midfield has been Scotland's strongest unit under both Roxburgh and Brown. Defence has improved to the extent that Jim Leighton's 40th clean sheet in 77 caps was also his country's 14th in 15 competitive games, an astonishing record marked only by Messrs Shearer and Gascoigne since December 1994.

If those departments maintain standards, and the strikers continue to forge a bond, Gothenburg need not be a cause for trepidation.

Nomination for Zola in PFA awards

Gianfranco Zola is the only foreign player in the nominations for the players' Player of the Year which were released by the players' union yesterday, writes Glenn Moore.

The Italian, whose goal defeated England in the World Cup qualifier, is joined in the final six by Alan Shearer who admitted yesterday that his vote had been cast for Zola.

"I voted for him even though he did beat us at Wembley. He's a tremendous player, he's small but he's strong on the ball and has two great feet. He's come in from another country, which isn't easy, and taken everything in his stride."

Shearer chose David Beckham as his Young Player of the Year. Beckham is actually nominated in both categories and is joined by team-mates Roy Keane, in the senior award, and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer in the junior category.

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, said: "It is nice to be recognised by your fellow professionals in this way. These are the awards that have a special meaning for players because it is they who make the final choice."

PFA players of the year: Manchester United David Beckham, Liverpool Alan Shearer, Arsenal Roy Keane, Tottenham Hotspur Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Chelsea Dennis Bergkamp, Newcastle United Peter Crouch, Blackburn Rovers Ian Wright, Aston Villa Stuart Pearce, West Ham United Andy Carroll, Luton Town Adam Lallana, Reading FC Harry Redknapp, Middlesbrough George Horne, Ipswich Town Paul Tisdale, Burnley Lee Young, Huddersfield Town Kevin Phillips, Notts County Paul Smith, Doncaster Rovers Paul Smith, Barnsley Paul Smith, Blackpool Paul Smith, Bolton Wanderers Paul Smith, Bournemouth Paul Smith, Cambridge United Paul Smith, Carlisle United Paul Smith, Colchester United Paul Smith, Crewe Alexandra Paul Smith, Exeter City Paul Smith, Grimsby Town Paul Smith, Hartlepool United Paul Smith, Hereford United Paul Smith, Hull City Paul Smith, Lincoln City Paul Smith, Mansfield Town Paul Smith, Millwall Paul Smith, Morecambe Paul Smith, Nantwich Town Paul Smith, Northwich Victoria Paul Smith, Oldham Athletic Paul Smith, Peterborough United Paul Smith, Rotherham United Paul Smith, Shrewsbury Town Paul Smith, Southend United Paul Smith, Stevenage Borough Paul Smith, Swindon Town Paul Smith, Torquay United Paul Smith, Walsley Paul Smith, Walsingham Paul Smith, Weymouth Paul Smith, Woking Paul Smith, Wycombe Wanderers Paul Smith, York City Paul Smith.

On Sunday Ipswich journey south to play Slough in the Cup. Slough expect to be at full strength and will be hoping that their coach, John Shaw, returns from coaching in South Africa in time for tomorrow's game.

The defending champions, Hightown, who make the long trip from Liverpool to Southampton, have a tough league encounter against Trojans who are desperately fighting to avoid relegation but should be assured of a semi-final place in the cup when they entertain Aldridge, the only non-National League club remaining in the competition on Sunday.

ACTIVE

THE MAN OF THE YEAR
3,000
One Man's Journey
THE MALE PILL
ROCK BOTTOM
BEAT HEART ATTACKS
LOOK COOL ON THE BEACH
BE A KITCHEN CASANOVA
KICK BOX LIKE A PRO

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NOW MONTHLY

Britons on top form

Sailing
STUART ALEXANDER

Two wins in two starts gave the best possible boost to Britain's America's Cup crew taking part in a warm-up regatta in Auckland yesterday.

"It was an absolutely cracking result for the guys," said Angus Melrose, one of the managers of the syndicate representing the Royal Dorset Yacht Club.

After a delay for the wind to settle in at about 14 knots, the British crew, sailing one of the matched pair of America's Cup yachts being provided by the defending Team New Zealand, capitalised on a premature start by Ed Baird for the New York Yacht Club and pulled away to win by 54 seconds.

But they trailed another American, Rod Davis, at the helm of San Francisco's Amer-

ica True, for most of the first heat only for their skipper, Chris Law, and local tactician Murray Jones, to engineer an inside overlap at the first turning mark and lead for the rest of the race, winning by 24 seconds.

Baird then went on to beat France's Société Nautique Port Camargue, to add to two victories on the opening day against America True.

Each of the teams is scheduled to race each other twice, the top points scores then going into a final against New Zealand tomorrow and Sunday.

Approaching Ireland, Finland's Ludde Logvall in the 80ft Nicorite is praying for the return of the blustery winds that powered him from New York in his bid to break the record for the crossing to the Lizard. He expects to finish tomorrow evening in 11 days, beating the record of 12 days 4 hours set in 1905.

Ipswich on the attack

Hockey
BILL COLWILL

Downs Mills, the Ipswich manager, criticised the back-to-back scheduling of league and quarter-final cup matches for this weekend.

"Absolutely ridiculous, after there was such a long winter break and numerous gaps during the season," he said.

"It is unreasonable to be called upon to play such key league and cup fixtures on successive days and particularly demanding on my team which has just returned from playing in the European Cup-Winners' Cup in the Netherlands where we played four games in four days over the Easter holiday," he added.

Ipswich returned home from Utrecht with the silver medal. Fortunately they have no injury problems for their league game

Chairmen being no more inclined to sack themselves than they ever were, the luck stops with the man with the clipboard and, increasingly, the worried expression.

good I can swim'. Others worry that they might perform badly in front of a big audience. I'm 'yeah, come on', *Really* up for it. When you get to the Olympics the difference physically between the eight meo on the blocks is very small, it's mentally that there's a huge difference."

Just as the difference will be between the ears in Gothenburg next week. "Before Atlanta I was trying to get within range of the world's best," he said, "whereas afterwards I felt I put myself in there. I'm on par with them and I'm knocking them off ooc by one until I get to the top."

much involved in the event. "All eyes were on the World Championship last weekend with the draw for the first round. But now the draw is out of the way I'm focused on this event and rising to the challenge."

Davis, the world No 10, recovered from 2-0 down to beat the out of touch Glaswegian with a five-frame unanswered burst. "I can consider myself fortunate to win 5-2 because it's a ridiculous scoreline for the way the first half of the match went," explained the six times former world champion.

"Alan could easily have been 3-1 up and I'm not sure it's a match he'll be very pleased with."

Golf
George Wilson, deputy secretary of the St Andrews Royal and Ancient Golf Club, died on Wednesday aged 58. Wilson, born in Lenzie, joined the famous club in 1973 and was made deputy secretary 10 years later.

avail.

Leicester's superhero
Coca-Cola Cup final keeper Kasey
Keller talks to Phil Shaw, page 30

sport

Hickman's high hopes
Guy Hodgson meets a swimmer
with an eye on gold, page 31

Blackburn persuaded Hendry to stay

Football
ALAN NIXON

Colin Hendry is staying with Blackburn Rovers and will turn down the opportunity to join Rangers or Newcastle United. The Scotland centre-back has had heart-to-heart talks with Jack Walker, the Rovers owner, and has been persuaded to remain at his adopted home.

Hendry had grown restless at Rovers this season because of their disappointing campaign, and interest from the Scottish champions and Newcastle fuelled speculation that he was about to leave Ewood Park. However, the prospect of a coaching post and a promise that the club will make up £50m available to the new manager, Roy Hodgson, when he arrives in summer has been enough to convince Hendry to stay. He will commit himself to a new contract which will take his earnings to about £12,000 a week.

Football Association of Ireland officials are backing the national manager, Mick McCarthy, who is asking critics to keep "giving him a fair chance" despite the 3-2 World Cup defeat in Macedonia. Pat Quigley, the FAI's president, said McCarthy had the full support of his association and would be kept on for at least the two years of his contract, signed in March. Disillusioned Irish fans are ready with a campaign to put McCarthy's job under pressure, but the former Ireland centre-back, who is taken over from the hero-worshipped Jack Charlton, seems secure.

"Mick has got the difficult job, because we no longer have the Paul McGraths and people like that at the stage where they were top of the pops, and it's going to take time to blend together all the new players he has had to bring in," Quigley said. "But Mick knows himself what lies in front of him, and he's only half-way through his contract. I would be very sad if people didn't give him a fair chance."

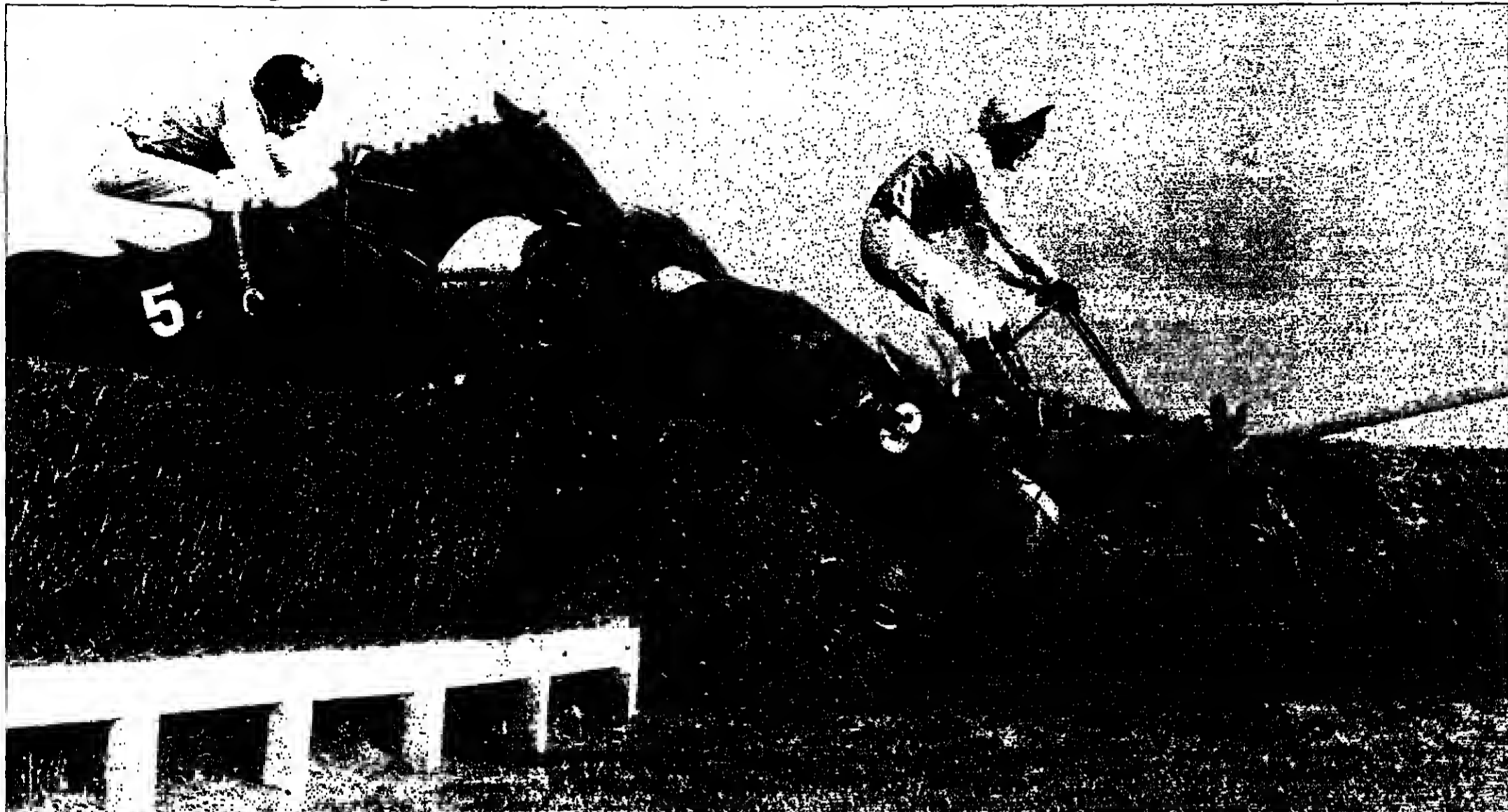
Scottish fans have no reason to worry about their national coach, Craig Brown, who has steered Scotland to a seven-point lead in their World Cup qualifying group after the victory over Austria at Celtic Park. Their problem lies with television. BBC Scotland confirmed yesterday that there will be no live coverage of the Group Four match against Sweden in Gothenburg on 30 April. Only highlights of a potentially decisive fixture will be shown.

"We try to provide Scotland supporters with comprehensive coverage when budget constraints allow," a BBC spokesman said. "But we have to make decisions on the funding available to us and we have already shown live four games out of six in Scotland's World Cup group. We will have live radio coverage of the match in Sweden and an extended highlights package from Gothenburg," a BBC spokesman said. Paul Gascoigne could be back in a Rangers jersey within a fortnight. The England midfielder has had the plaster removed from the ankle he injured in a six-a-side tournament

in Amsterdam at the end of January and is back in training. He hopes to make a first-team return against Raith on 15 April. Raith will also provide the opponents when Tommy Johnson makes his Celtic debut on Saturday, but his transfer from Aston Villa is still under scrutiny. The agent, Blair Morgan, insists Celtic are in the clear over their £2.4m move for Johnson despite allegations that an unlicensed agent, Kevin Mason, was involved in the deal. Fifa, the governing body of

world football, faced the Scottish Football Association to start an inquiry into agents involved in the transfer last week. Fifa fined Celtic for using an unlicensed agent in the signing of Alan Stubbs from Bolton last summer. "We have received a fax from Fifa which we have passed on to Celtic for their comments," the SFA spokesman, David Findlay, said. Celtic insist the deal was brokered only by Blair Morgan, who holds a Fifa licence. He said yesterday: "Kevin Mason was not involved at any stage."

Horses and jockeys are made to suffer on a day of racing uncertainties



Mulligan and Richard Dunwoody, about to collide with the Aintree turf yesterday, escaped injury but two other horses were destroyed on the first day of the Grand National meeting. Fatality also marred the Dubai World Cup, when the Japanese runner Hokuto Vega broke a foreleg. The British-trained Singpiel went on to claim the richest prize in racing of £1.4m Photograph: Robert Hallam

Fighting Asprilla sent off

ADAM SZRETER

Faustino Asprilla was among six players to be shown red cards in four matches as the lid on the simmering pot known as the South American World Cup qualifying group was well and truly blown off on Wednesday night.

In La Paz Argentina's Nelson Vivas was sent off for two bookable offences in quick succession against Bolivia, and he should have been followed by Gustavo Zapata, but Zapata's refusal to leave sparked the first brawl of the night. The main event, though, came when Argentina's Julio Cruz ran off the pitch to fetch the ball near the Bolivian bench.

The Bolivian team assistant, Javier Avila, allegedly punched Cruz several times and knocked him down. Other Argentinian players and Bolivian riot police joined in the fight while spectators hurled projectiles. A policeman left Argentina's Carlos Rojas in severe pain by spraying him in the face with gas. After 17 minutes of "injury time", the game ended 2-1 to Bolivia.

In Asuncion, the Paraguayan goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert came to blows with Colombia's Asprilla late in the game. The incident, in the 81st minute, led to a penalty which was converted by Mauricio Serna to wipe out Paraguay's lead. But Denis Sotol in Paraguay's winner less than two minutes later.

In Lima, Ecuador ended with nine men after forward Agustín Delgado was sent off in the 48th minute and the captain, Luis Capurro, followed in the 84th minute for hitting an opponent. Ecuador still managed to draw 1-1 with Peru.

Uruguay beat Venezuela 3-1 in relative peace and quiet, all of which means that the group is still wide open with seven games each to play. The top four countries qualify.

Paraguay, with 20 points, look set to reach the finals for the first time since 1986. Colombia, with 17, also look a good bet. But behind them Argentina are involved in an almighty scramble on 13 points with Bolivia, Ecuador and Uruguay. Peru, on 10 points, and Chile, on nine cannot be counted out.

Van de Velde joins Warrington as Harris departs

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

Darryl Van de Velde was yesterday appointed as the new coach of Warrington as they sold Iestyn Harris to Leeds and as John Joyner departed from Van de Velde's previous club, Castleford.

This dizzying sequence of events unfolded within a few hours yesterday. Warrington got in first with the announce-

ment that Van de Velde, in charge at Castleford for five years before becoming chief executive of the South Queensland Crushers and later coach at Huddersfield, has replaced his fellow-Australian, John Doherty, who resigned last week. "They have got some talent here," Van de Velde said. "Although I will need to bring in a couple of new players, I've told the existing players that I've got an open mind and that they are all in my plans if they show me

they have something to offer." Van de Velde starts his new job with around £300,000 in the coffers following the sale of Harris to Leeds. The Leeds Academy player, Danny Sculthorpe, younger brother of Warrington's Paul, also goes to Widderspool as part of the transaction. "It is Leeds' biggest signing for 45 years," said chief executive Gary Hetherington of the club's record deal. Harris, on the transfer list at a world record £1.35m since last July, said that he was

relieved not to have become the game's first £1m player, although his move is the second biggest - after the £440,000 paid by Wigan to Widders for Martin Offiah - in pure cash terms. Dean Bell has put him straight into the squad for tonight's home game against Wigan, although he has not yet decided in which position he will play him. Joyner's departure from Castleford, after four Super League defeats and a Challenge Cup exit at the hands of Salford,

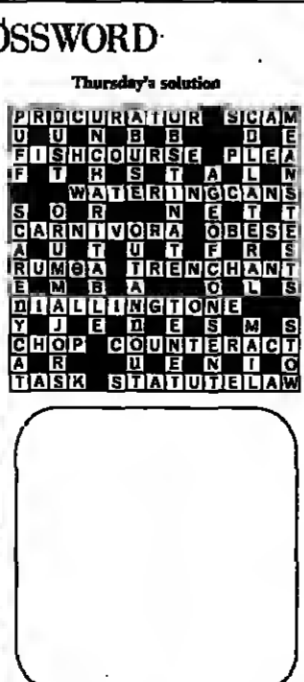
ends a 25-year association with his home-town club as player and coach and is further proof that there is little room for sentiment in the modern game. As a parting by mutual agreement was announced, the club's chairman, Philip Hindle, said: "John has been a magnificent servant at the club for a very long time. He has put in a great deal of hard work over the close season, but the results have been disappointing. We wish him all the best for the future."

Castleford will advertise for a successor, but such is the nature of the coaching merry-go-round that Steve Simms, who left Halifax last month, could be a contender, as would the Castleford-born Andy Goodway, should he carry out his threat to resign at Oldham. The former assistant coach Mick Morgan has taken over as caretaker. The Bradford prop Brian McDermott has been suspended for four matches for striking three opponents towards the end of his

side's Silk Cut Challenge Cup victory over Leeds last Saturday. The suspension will leave Mick Demott free to play for the Bulls at Wembley on 3 May. His Leeds namesake, Barrie, was suspended for three matches for a high tackle in the same match, detected on video. He will appeal against the ban this morning. Another Leeds forward, Terry Newton, escaped suspension despite being found guilty of using his knees in the tackle. League of Impatience, page 31



- ACROSS**
- A joke accepted by Irishman mostly with dignity (8)
 - Chap attending church had moved to the music (6)
 - Play Monopoly after making threats (9, 6)
 - Rulers in the main taken round in limo (7)
 - Sick with study after first of teachers walked over (7)
 - Holy book one dropped after most of short argument (8)
 - Girl disputed issue (5)
 - Topic of article by the writer (5)
 - Need coat embroidered with yarn (8)
 - Broadcast, tasteless, causing upset at a high level (7)
 - Face that is evident in club (7)
- DOWN**
- Doctor taking on one rich family (6)
 - Love to be embraced by girl? Another girl, without question, is huxon and beautiful (9)
 - Composer meant to show variations in it (7)
 - I had longed initially to be accepted by big heroes (5)
 - Ready to love American - repeatedly love American? That's about right (7)
 - Punished one in the last month, after upset (5)



- ACROSS**
- It might be a play! (3, 5, 3, 4)
 - Bridge players pocketing snake in French city (6)
 - Good grain given to family supplying leather (8)
 - Used telephone in act that's insane (8)
 - 16, one could say (2, 2, 4)
 - Leader of boats is missing half of each body of water (5, 3)
 - 9, one could say (2, 2, 5)
 - Don't get carried away - boyfriend never turned up (6, 2)
 - The Italian is trapped by woman with the old half-life influence (4, 3)
 - A number of Irish police (not first-class) held up police operation (7)
 - Person mostly found round both sides of city (6)
 - Some well-known EU organisations set up in French city (5)
 - Young lad gets a dollar, and nothing more (5)

Delgado in at the Davis Cup deep end

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS

David Lloyd, in contrast to his cricketing namesake, is unlikely to be calling up the phrase "we murdered 'em" in relation to a match against Zimbabwe. The Davis Cup captain is simply relieved to be able to send out a team.

What promised to be a weekend of optimism at the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, with expectations of Britain taking another step towards the World Group, appeared doom-laden after injuries eliminated Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski.

Violated though our cricketers are, they at least number more than two at the highest level, although, to be fair, few

tennis nations could afford to compete without their top player, let alone both of them. Lloyd, in the circumstances, has chosen Jamie Delgado, 20, and Andrew Richardson, 23, to make their debut against the Zimbabwean brothers Black, Byron and Wayne.

Delgado, Britain's No 1 for the occasion on the strength of a world ranking of No 260, opens the tie at noon today against Wayne Black, Zimbabwe's No 2, who is ranked No 271 on the ATP Tour computer.

Richardson, No 266 in the world, then plays the experienced Byron Black, ranked No 46. Should Britain fail to win either of the opening singles rubbers, the doubles partnership of Neil Broad (an Olympic silver medalist with Henman) and Mark Petchey will have to defeat

the brothers Black tomorrow in order to keep the tie alive for Sunday's reverse singles - Delgado v Byron Black followed by Richardson v Wayne Black. Victory would take Britain into the promotion round for the World Group in September. Defeat would bring a trip to Ukraine in July, the week after Wimbledon, for a Euro/African Zone Group I tie.

Delgado, 5ft 8in from Warwickshire, is a product of the David Lloyd Slater Squad who came to prominence as a junior, winning the 14 and under singles title at the Orange Bowl in Miami in 1991. He has yet to make an impact on the main Tour.

Richardson, a 6ft 7in left-hander from Lincolnshire, is a former pupil at the Rover LTA School at Bisham Abbey who has shown encouraging signs of

graduating from the satellite and challenger circuits. Given the option of selecting the 26-year-old Petchey (ranked No 196) for the singles, Lloyd decided that the Essex player's poor record in the competition represented more of a gamble than the bleeding of Delgado and Richardson.

"This is a great opportunity for Jamie and Andrew to show us what they can do," Lloyd said. "I am certain they will not let us down, although I know this is probably the highest match of their careers."

Delgado marvelled at the difference a week has made. "I was not in the team to start with, and now I'm playing No 1," he said. "It's bound to be a difficult contest, with Tim and Greg unable to play, but anything can happen in the Davis Cup. I've played

team competitions before, but never at this level, so I shall be a little bit nervous and excited, but I think I shall be all right. I spoke to Tim on the phone only this morning. He said, 'Just go for it, you have nothing to lose.'"

Richardson acknowledged that he had never played a more important match. "I don't think I shall be too nervous," he added, "because I'm playing the best I've ever played in recent weeks."

The Crystal Palace's 2,300 capacity is sold out today and Sunday, but a number of seats are available for tomorrow's doubles. The venue was chosen partly because several other suitable indoor arenas were already booked but also because Lloyd has fond memories of Britain's victory there against Australia which took them to the final in 1978. Happy days.